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Kwong Nui Wang



Hong Kong: 20 Years of Transition

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KWOK NAI WANG

HONG KONG BRAVES 1997

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INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, people from around the world are interested in, and concerned about, the future of Hong Kong. But their knowledge about Hong Kong is limited. Hong Kong's story needs to be told. The Urban Rural Mission of the Christian Conference of Asia attempted to tell Hong Kong's story in December, 1991 by publishing "Hong Kong: 1997, A Christian Perspective." The book consists of 12 speeches and articles I wrote between 1988 and 1991.

Now that book is out of stock. Rather than do a second printing, I have decided to tell the Hong Kong story in a more systematic way. Hence this book.

I wrote this book not from the perspective of a journalist or an academic, but as a Christian who is concerned about Hong Kong's future. Hong Kong is rapidly changing. It is difficult to describe what is happening or even to keep up on the changes. But I am trying.

This book is dedicated to its readers, primarily non-Chinese and non-Hong Kong residents, who share my concern for Hong Kong. I do not ask readers to agree with what is in this book; however, I implore readers to take an alternative view of Hong Kong.

I want to pay tribute to the many Hong Kong citizens who are committed to building a better Hong Kong, and to the people from all over the world who are committed to building civil societies.

Finally, a word of deep appreciation to Carol Ann Stanton, who typed my manuscript; to Loren Keith Stanton and Lois Cole, who did the editing and formatting; and to Chan Shun Hing, Sequire, who did the design for the cover. They have done a tremendous job putting this book together in a short period of time.

Kwok Nai Wang

First Sunday in Advent, 1993.

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INTRODUCING THE HONG KONG CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

HONG KONG'S ECONOMIC DYNAMISM

Creation of a Miracle

From a Barren Rock

Shortly after Great Britain took over Hong Kong, its foreign minister, Lord Palmerston, described Hong Kong Island in his report to the Parliament as “hardly more than a barren rock....” Indeed when the British acquired Hong Kong, they only thought of getting a foothold for their traders in China. No one would ever have dreamed that Hong Kong would become one of the most unique and important economic centers of the world.

By the turn of the century, Hong Kong had become an entreport, full of vitality. Its importance was equal to the key Chinese city-ports of Shanghai and Guangzhou (Canton). Over the past century and a half, Hong Kong went through an enormous number of trials and adversity. However, the people of Hong Kong, because of their resilience and endurance, were able to turn each crisis into an opportunity for growth.

First came the Second World War. Occupied by the Japanese for three years and eight months, from December, 1941 to August, 1945, Hong Kong experienced bombing and severe destruction. It had to start all over again after the war. Out of the rubble, Hong Kong was born again.

Then came the influx of refugees from the mainland after 1949. The Communists came to power and declared the birth of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. As a result, nationalist sympathizers fled by the thousands. Hong Kong had less than 600,000

residents in 1945. The number increased to two million by 1952!

Many people wondered at the time how Hong Kong could survive with literally no natural resources and so many new people to feed and house. To make matters worse, Hong Kong's entreport function ended when the Korean War broke out in 1950. The United States of America declared a total embargo on China, refusing to take Chinese goods shipped from Hong Kong, as well as refusing to export US goods to China via Hong Kong.

Fortunately, a few business tycoons, who fled from Shanghai, used their experience and money to start several textile and garment factories in Hong Kong. Both industries provided thousands of jobs from the 1950s to the 1970s. The plastics industry became another successful venture in the mid-1950s.

Pearl of the Orient

Hong Kong is a majestic city. Its lively harbor is flanked by tall buildings which form a magnificent skyline. Its charm also lies in the fact that it is a western-style city and yet retains its Chinese heritage. Chinese culture permeates the territory, and one sees traditions and customs being carried out in all the seasons. The sub-tropical weather allows for plenty of sunshine, which can be fully appreciated at a dozen lovely beaches. Many tourists come for brief vacations. Many more are attracted to Hong Kong because it is a shoppers' paradise. A tax-free port, it offers inexpensive, quality Chinese products as well as Japanese cameras, stereos, VCRs, etc. Not surprisingly, a sizeable amount of Hong Kong's revenue comes from tourism. Last year, 7.1 million people from all over the world visited Hong Kong. Together they spent more than US\$4 billion.

Since the 1970s Hong Kong has not only attracted people to visit but to trade as well. In 1992, the value of total exports amounted to US\$128 billion, making Hong Kong the tenth largest trading country/territory in the world. It has one of the world's busiest container ports and the world's most advanced telecommunications facilities. Today,

Hong Kong is one of the world's key financial centers.

Ideal Geographical Location

Hong Kong has one of the finest harbors in the world. Victoria harbor is well protected by Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula and Lantau Island. But more importantly, Hong Kong stands in a strategic position relative to mainland China. It is benefitted tremendously by this vast hinterland, which has a quarter of the world's population. Hong Kong is China's principal port. Since the re-opening of China in 1979, approximately one third of its total exports has come through Hong Kong. Additionally, China supplies Hong Kong with 40% of its water and more than half of its food, mainly vegetables and meat.

Hong Kong also serves as the gateway into China. For a long time, Taiwanese had to go through Hong Kong to go to China. Goods from the United States and Canada as well as from many other Southeast Asian nations also entered China via Hong Kong. Hong Kong is at the center of the Southeast Asia and Pacific region (SEAPAC). It is a hub for air and sea travel in the fastest growing region in the world.

Reliable Work Force

Ninety-seven percent of the citizens of Hong Kong are ethnic Chinese. Chinese living outside of China are known to be hard-working. In the early days, the majority of Hong Kong citizens were refugees who came from the mainland to seek a better life. They wanted to make money. But they had little to offer except their willingness to work for long hours, in whatever circumstances, and at low wages. Hong Kong not only survived, but developed by leaps and bounds in the 1950s and 1960s mainly due to the sweat and blood these people shed.

The younger generation in Hong Kong has had plenty of exposure to science and technology due to the recent rapid expansion of tertiary education. One in eighteen of those aged between seventeen and twenty

studied for degrees in 1990. This ratio is predicted to increase to one in five by 1997! Hong Kong college graduates, together with the thousands returning from education overseas form a formidable entrepreneurial labor force. For the past three decades, it has been Hong Kong's talented youth who have helped to bring forth an economic miracle.

Well-managed Social Order

Hong Kong Society is well-managed. Comparatively speaking, everything is done in an orderly manner. This is due to the government's efficient and dedicated civil service whose total strength now stands at over one hundred and ninety thousand. Until recently the Hong Kong civil service was headed by mostly British citizens.

The British sent not only many trained, experienced and dedicated people to form the backbone of the civil service in the territory, but also a British form of government. To maintain that government, practically all local senior civil servants have been sent to further their training in Britain.

Over the years, the British have installed the rule of law in Hong Kong. By and large, the people of Hong Kong have accepted it as one of the most important aspects of their daily lives. The rule of law is fully supported by the judiciary. Despite a few hiccups from time to time, it is able to maintain its independence and effectiveness.

So the British have established an effective administration through the rule of law, an independent judiciary and a group of tough, impartial and honest officials who maintain law and order in Hong Kong. These important pillars of society are crucial in contributing to Hong Kong's development and economic progress.

Free Trade Environment

For over a century, the government intentionally adopted laissez-faire principles in formulating its economic as well as social policies. The government only interfered with business activities when it detected that something had gone wrong. This free enterprise, market oriented

system has continued to contribute to Hong Kong's economic success.

Though not a country, Hong Kong has offices to promote trade in North America, Europe and Japan. The message for the international business community is simple: There is free trade in Hong Kong. Its tax policy is uncomplicated and the tax rate is low, much lower than its neighbors Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan, not to mention the western industrialized nations. Hong Kong has no currency controls. Competition is open and fair.

Excellent Infra-Structure

Hong Kong keeps on building. Old structures and houses are torn down daily, and new ones are built. Height controls have been relaxed in almost every part of the territory except Kowloon Tong and Kowloon City, the areas nearest to the present airport. Ten years ago, the tallest building was the Hopewell Center (sixty-two stories); five years ago, it was the Bank of China (seventy-eight stories); and now it is Central Plaza (eighty-six stories). Recent office complexes, like Times Square, are stylishly built.

Housing has been a problem in Hong Kong since the 1950s. In the 1950s and 60s, the Hong Kong government built tens of thousands of residential flats. In the 1970s, Governor Murray MacLehose launched an ambitious ten year public housing development plan, with a goal of placing 40% of Hong Kong people in government housing before the end of the 1980s. This plan was successfully implemented.

In order to decrease population density in the urban areas, the government has been building "new towns" in the New Territories and on the outlying islands. Kwun Tong, Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin now have a population of seven hundred thousand each. Tai Po, Fanling, Sheung Shui, Tin Shui Wai, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Tsuen Kwan O, and Tung Chung eventually will have between two hundred thousand and three hundred thousand people each. Reclamation of land from the ocean as well as the levelling of hills continues. New roads are being built; old roads are expanded and improved incessantly.

There is an impressive public transportation system in Hong Kong. The Mass Transit Railway in town, the Light Rail system in the Western New Territories, and the Kowloon-Canton Railway, which runs from North to South, have reduced the time and effort required to reach the urban centers. Buses, minibuses, and taxis complement the rail systems to create a comprehensive plan.

The existing airport will soon operate at capacity. When the green light from China finally comes, Hong Kong will build a US\$12 billion airport at Chek Lap Kok and a road and rail system connecting the new airport to the city center.

Low Crime and Corruption Rates

In the 1950s and 60s corruption abounded in Hong Kong. You had to buy your way through the bureaucracy in order to get things done. Government officials who were responsible for issuing licenses or certificates became very wealthy. Law officers earned their fortunes by ignoring the crimes committed by syndicates or triads. Organized crime and organized corruption were the order of the day.

In the 1970s Hong Kong people could no longer tolerate the corruption. As a result of massive protests and cries, the Hong Kong government set up the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974. For the past twenty years, ICAC has cleaned up most of the organized corruption. ICAC also has done a fabulous job in getting its "clean living" message across to the general public. ICAC was responsible for restoring the confidence of foreign investors in the territory's reputation for fair competition.

Compared with other big cities, like New York, London and Tokyo, the crime rate in Hong Kong is relatively low. This is mainly due to the well-managed law enforcement body, especially the police. After decades of battles between the police and the triads, Hong Kong could, until just recently, claim that the activities of the underworld are under control. It can also claim that it is one of the safest cities in the world.

The Form of Government

Constitutional Foundation

Hong Kong has legally been a British Crown Colony since June 26, 1843. However, the British military occupied Hong Kong Island in January, 1841. The two documents which legally constitute the Colony are the Letters Patent and the Royal Instructions. The Letters Patent enable the British Monarch to appoint the governor of Hong Kong. Representing the Monarch, the governor of Hong Kong is not only the symbolic head of the colony, he is also the chief executive officer. He is given full legislative, executive, as well as judicial powers. He is also the commander-in-chief of the British forces stationed in Hong Kong. In policy matters he has the Executive Council (Exco) to back him up. Together with the Legislative Council (Legco), which he served as the President until 1992 and to which he appointed every member until 1985, he makes all the laws for Hong Kong although technically speaking, the British Parliament can also enact laws for Hong Kong. He also appoints the Chief Justice and all the senior judges both in the high courts and the court of appeal.

The Royal Instructions outline certain restrictions on the governor. For example, he cannot enact laws which contravene British interests and British international obligations; he must follow the British Monarch's decisions regarding the number of members of Exco and Legco.

Governor-in-Council

On paper, the governor enjoys unlimited power and authority. Together with Exco, he makes all the important policy decisions for Hong Kong. One must not underestimate the importance of Exco in the governing of Hong Kong. In theory, Executive Councilors are policy advisors to the governor. Invariably, for the sake of smooth operation, governors appoint "yes" men and women. At the present time there are thirteen appointed members serving along with the three most senior

civil servants who are ex-officio members. Of course, the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary, and the Attorney General are also appointed by the governor.

In the unlikely event that the governor acts against Exco's advice, he has to give a full explanation to the British Foreign Office. The governor is accountable to the minister responsible for Hong Kong affairs in the foreign office.

Even with complete control over his counselors, the governor does not have a free hand in the running of Hong Kong. First, he has to listen carefully to the British Government, the British Parliament, as well as the business community. He is duty-bound to protect British interests should there be any clash between British interests and Hong Kong interests. Reportedly, the former governor, David Wilson, was dumped because a few business tycoons in London did not think he had done enough to protect their interests in Hong Kong and in China.

Second, the governor has to listen to the business community in Hong Kong. In many countries the business community is influential. In Hong Kong, business has even more control. In his book, "Hong Kong: Borrowed Place, Borrowed Time," Richard Hughes said that the line of authority was firstly, the Jockey Club (only the richest in the community can join as members); secondly, Jardines (the oldest British firm in Hong Kong); thirdly, the Hong Kong Bank (a private bank, but performing the functions of a central bank); and fourthly, the governor.

It is an open secret that a few British commercial firms and a few Chinese families control Hong Kong. They monopolize many facets of life in Hong Kong.

In October, 1993, the chairman of the Hong Kong Bank, William Purves, decided to move to London where the head office of the bank relocated three years ago. He vacated his Exco seat. Instead of appointing somebody who would really help him, Governor Patten appointed the Bank's new chief, John Gray. Gray had earlier spoken against Patten's constitutional reform proposals.

Legislative Council

In 1847, Legco consisted of the governor, who served as the President, and three other members. They were all civil servants. In 1865, it was expanded to six civil servants and four non-civil servants. It was not until 1884 that a Chinese person was appointed to Legco.

Indirect elections were first introduced to Legco in 1985 when twelve members were elected by the functional constituencies (professional groups and trade unions) and another twelve were selected from the nineteen district boards and two municipal councils. The first direct elections were introduced to Legco in 1991 with eighteen members elected. Right now, Legco has fifty-nine members: eighteen directly elected, twenty-one indirectly elected by functional constituencies, seventeen appointed, and three senior civil servants. The president is appointed by the governor and confirmed by Legco.

Major functions of Legco include the enactment of all laws, the appropriation of public funds as well as the debating of government policies. The direction of Legco is clear. The government should be increasingly answerable to Legco.

However, recent events indicate that the Hong Kong government is still not prepared to be accountable to the legislature. In the last legislative year (October 1992 - July 1993), Legco debated many crucial issues, and by a large margin, voted to ask the government, for example, to introduce a Central Provident Fund Scheme, to make the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) an independent body (rather than to continue to let the police investigate police), and to reject the Sino-British agreement on the proposed Court of Final Appeal. But in each situation the government either has delayed, or worse still, rejected Legco's advice.

Over the years, Hong Kong government has improved. But, it is still a colonial government. It is accountable to London, rather than to the people of Hong Kong. It wants to maintain its narrow and closed minded methods rather than allowing people meaningful participation in government.

The Judiciary

It is clear that the executive, the legislative and the judiciary in Hong Kong should be independent of one another.

The head of the judiciary, the Chief Justice, is appointed by the governor. All other justices, from the Court of Appeal and the High Court are also appointed by the governor. Judges of lower courts, including district courts and magistracies, and other tribunals are appointed by an independent committee headed by the Chief Justice. The Privy Council in London is Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal.

The legal system in Hong Kong is very similar to that of the United Kingdom. Hong Kong relies on the "common law." In the first few years, Chinese Law (with the exception of severe corporal punishment) was administered. But since 1843, Hong Kong has largely followed British law. Over the years, Legco has amended many British laws, recognizing that Hong Kong needs laws which appreciate Hong Kong's differences.

Attempts at Constitutional Reform

The first serious attempt at updating the political structure of Hong Kong came after the Second World War. Governor Mark Young proposed that the Urban Council be made more representative and that its powers be greatly widened to include all internal affairs. Today, the two municipal councils, Urban and Regional, are responsible mainly for cultural and hygienic affairs. Young also suggested unofficial members in Legco be increased to a simple majority (eight as opposed to seven officials). Surprisingly, the wealthy Chinese community leaders objected. Because of the change of government in the mainland in 1949 and because of the Korean War, Young's proposals were shelved indefinitely.

Then came the 1967 riots. Though instigated by the Chinese Communists, the riots nevertheless, demonstrated the frustrations of the young people of Hong Kong. This generation was being neglected by its parents who had to work unusually long hours to make ends

meet. But more importantly, the government discovered that most people felt a lack of belonging and identity. Over the years, the government had alienated the masses whom it attempted to serve.

In order to bridge the gap between the government and the people, the governor quickly set up offices in every district. It was hoped that through these offices, communication between the masses and the government would be enhanced. That was the beginning of concerted efforts to consult the people. The government claimed in the late 1970s that it had derived a dozen ways to consult the people of Hong Kong before a policy was introduced. There was an advisory committee in almost every government department. Working parties on major issues were from time to time appointed. Green papers were distributed to invite public discussion on important policies before the government implemented the policy through the publication of a White paper.

In the early 1980s, from the "rule by consultation," the "rule by consensus" emerged. The government claimed that before any major policy was introduced, not only must there be a consensus in Exco, but in Legco as well.

District Administration

On June 6, 1980, the government published a Green Paper entitled, "A Pattern of District Administration in Hong Kong." Though it received little attention and discussion, the government eagerly pushed ahead with the idea of district administration. It published a White Paper called "District Administration in Hong Kong" in January, 1981. Within a month, District Boards were set up, beginning in Kwun Tong, one of the oldest "new" towns.

According to the White Paper, the District Boards were "charged with coordinating and where appropriate, monitoring the work of government departments in the district, and ensuring that the departments should be as responsive as practicable to district needs and wishes...." By 1982, District Boards were set up in all nineteen city and rural districts. In the beginning, most of the District Board

members were appointed. In 1985, half of them were returned by direct elections. In 1991, in most of the District Boards, two-thirds of the members were directly elected. Patten has proposed that in 1994, all district board members be directly elected. Though many board members complain about its limited powers, nevertheless the establishment of District Boards served as an important step in training citizens to be more active in the political process.

Representative Government

In November 1984, the White Paper on “The Future Development of Representative Government in Hong Kong” was published. The aims of the proposals were “to develop progressively a system of government the authority for which is firmly rooted in Hong Kong, which is able to represent with authority the views of the people of Hong Kong, and which is more directly accountable to the people of Hong Kong; to build this system on existing institutions, which have served Hong Kong well, and as far as possible, to preserve their best features including the maintenance of the well established practice of government by consensus; and to allow for further development if that should be the wish of the community.” The White Paper also proposed “a gradual start by introducing a very small number of directly elected members (in Legco) in 1988 and building up to a significant number of directly elected members by 1997.”

These political reforms would have been a step forward had the Chinese government not objected. Chinese leaders did and still do not like the idea of developing a representative government in Hong Kong. They especially objected to the introduction of direct elections in 1988, partially because they are not used to this kind of election. Many Chinese leaders think that they will lose control if they allow people to participate in government. China also felt that direct elections must not take place before the promulgation of the Basic Law, the mini-constitution for the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). They felt that if there was to be universal franchise in Hong Kong, it should

be given by China, not Britain.

As a result of vehement Chinese objections, there were no direct elections in 1988. The development of a truly representative government in Hong Kong ground to a halt. However, indirect elections did take place in 1985. Out of fifty-six Legco members, twenty-four were returned by indirect elections in September, 1985. Indirect elections have serious drawbacks. Only professionals and trade union leaders participate. The franchise of some of the seats is limited, inviting corruption. In 1991, a Regional Council functional constituency member was convicted of buying votes. His functional constituency only had thirty-six voters! This kind of indirect election is not only open to abuse, but violates the universal and equal political rights section of the International Covenant on Civic and Political Rights. (Article 25)

Patten's Proposals

The British government sent Christopher Patten, a political heavyweight from the ruling conservative party, to Hong Kong with a specific purpose. Patten is expected to use the remaining five years of British rule to firmly establish a government in Hong Kong which will maintain British influence without the British government officials' presence. In order to achieve this goal, Patten has decided to try to build a government which is both representative and accountable to the people of Hong Kong.

Before and after Patten's arrival, China warned Patten not to increase the number of directly elected seats in Legco. They also warned him not to appoint to Exco democratic leaders like Martin Lee and Szeto Wah, who won by large margins in the 1991 elections and who are leaders of the United Democrats of Hong Kong, the most influential political party in Hong Kong. Furthermore, Patten was asked by China to maintain the executive-led government rather than to give more power to the legislature.

Careful not to upset the Chinese, Patten followed these

suggestions. He focused instead on widening the franchise in future elections. He proposed to lower the voting age from twenty- one to eighteen. He also proposed that the entire working population vote in the functional constituencies. Hence, with the exception of homemakers and students, Hong Kong citizens would have an additional vote on top of a geographical vote. He also suggested that the election committee be constituted from directly elected members from district boards or municipal councils. The election committee is to elect ten members to Legco in 1995. And finally he proposed that as of 1994, all district board members and municipal council members would be returned by direct elections rather than be appointed by the governor.

In order to avoid accusations of “kowtowing” to China, Patten completely separated Exco and Legco. In other words, nobody, including himself, could sit on both councils at the same time. Patten explained that by separating the two councils, it would be easier to ensure executive accountability to Legco. In order to maintain a close relationship between the two councils, Patten pledged to go to Legco and answer questions once a month. Nevertheless, this new arrangement was a setback for a more representative government. No present Exco members have stood for elections of any kind.

Since the publication of Patten’s mild proposals on political reform, China has attacked Patten weekly, if not daily. We have yet to see how the Sino-British row will end. But, whatever the outcome, Hong Kong’s political development will encounter another major setback.

The Other Side

Hong Kong’s Affluence

Situated in a strategic part of the Southeast Asia Pacific region, Hong Kong has for the past fifteen years experienced an average growth of five to six percent per annum. The purchasing power parity analysis

of gross domestic product per capita is US\$17,062, nearly even with Italy and Canada, and surpassing Australia and Britain.

The total value of exports in the past twelve months in Hong Kong was valued at US\$128 billion, which ranks number ten in the world. Hong Kong also had HK\$287 billion in reserve at the end of 1992. Again, this was in the world's tenth position. Despite continual development of the infrastructure, Hong Kong has no foreign debt. As a financial center, Hong Kong's importance comes just after New York, London and Tokyo. For a small population of 5.8 million, living in a small area of about 1075 square kilometers, it is no simple matter for Hong Kong to have all of these economic achievements.

Hong Kong is seemingly a fairly affluent city, even by the world's standards. Modern buildings and shopping malls abound. On Sundays or public holidays, it is always difficult to get a table in the thousands of restaurants. Three people have two telephones and a television set on average. The literacy rate is one of the highest in Asia. Since 1978, Hong Kong provides nine years of compulsory free education and this will be increased to eleven years. The infant mortality rate is five per one thousand, the lowest in the world.

Raw Deal for the Poor

The fruits of affluence, though brought forth by the sweat and blood of the masses, including millions of laborers and new immigrants, are unfortunately not shared equally by all. In reality, Hong Kong is a city controlled by the rich, for the rich.

According to information given by the Hong Kong government, in 1992, there were still close to 200,000 people living in temporary housing. This includes the 20,800 living on boats. By one count, there are still 4,000 single men living in cages. These dwelling spaces are called cages because in an apartment of about 600 square feet in Shamshuipo, West Kowloon, there are fifteen three-tiered bunk beds. Each person occupies one, where he sleeps and stores his belongings. Since most build a fence around their beds, the whole apartment looks

like it is full of cages. There are also many street sleepers. Three years ago, after the former Labor Party leader, Neil Kinnock, visited the area, he said, "If you did not see Shamshuipo, you have not seen Hong Kong!"

Housing is the most serious problem in Hong Kong, affecting the quality of life of the masses. In a four hundred square foot apartment, the rental per month can be as much as HK\$7,000. Many families want to buy an apartment. It is not unusual to find that the cost for one square foot is as high as HK\$3,500 to \$4,000. Many married young professionals have to spend one salary to pay the mortgage.

Gap Between the Rich and the Poor

Salaries for professionals in Hong Kong are high. For a fresh university graduate, the monthly salary is US\$2,000 per month. But because of an inflation rate in the past several years of 10 to 11 percent, Hong Kong has become one of the most expensive cities in the world to live. The high inflation is mainly due to property speculation which for some strange reason, the government is not willing to curb. Often times, the government takes the lead by increasing its charges and fees. Annually, they raise public transportation fares at a rate equal to or greater than inflation. The so-called supply and demand principle is often used by the government as an excuse to emphasize its non-interventionist policy which favors the wealthy.

The tax structure also assists the rich. The income tax is a flat maximum of 15%. The profits tax or corporate tax is 17%. South Korea's is at 34%, Singapore's 31%, and Taiwan's 25%.

The tax structure is a major contributing factor in the ever widening gap between the rich and the poor. The "sandwich class" is the worst victim. Ten years ago, 16% of the total government revenue came from the salaries tax, and as high as 69% from the profits tax. The rest came from land sales and indirect taxes. Last year, as much as 36.1% came from the salaries tax and only 56% from the profits tax.

Inadequate Social Services

In any society, social services (education, social welfare, medical and health services) often serve as an effective tool to balance the rich and the poor. In the past, the government's provision of high quality social services did soften the effects of the gap between the rich and the poor. In 1990, there was a change in government policy.

The Hong Kong government wants to shed its heavy financial as well as administrative responsibilities in providing the general public with a high standard of social services. The principle of charging based on the costs of the service and the ability to pay, has been adopted. It has been suggested that the charge for a day in the hospital be increased to about 20% of the real costs, which is about HK\$250. This certainly is a big jump from HK\$43, which is what citizens now pay for one day in a government or government subsidized hospital. Semi-official bodies like the Housing Authority and the Hospital Authority now have full control in their domains. The government is thinking of reorganizing the social welfare department along similar lines.

Hong Kong is affluent, but it has yet to introduce a comprehensive social security system for the general population. Reportedly only 40% of the work force has some kind of pension to fall back on when they retire.

There is public assistance for those in need, although the level of support is the same as the minimum subsistence level. The unemployment rate in Hong Kong is low, around 2%. The average wage for factory workers is HK\$6,500 per month. This precludes any saving. The people of Hong Kong do not have a dependency attitude. They always work hard and try to make ends meet. Hong Kong needs a comprehensive social security system. The earlier, the better. This is something Hong Kong can afford. This will enhance citizens' sense of belonging. This is also in line with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which states in Article 9, that "everyone has the right to social security, including social insurance."

Lack of Long Term Policies

The Hong Kong government is a good manager, but it is not farsighted. It seldom has the courage and wisdom to tackle complex social as well as economic problems. It rarely introduces long-term comprehensive policies on crucial issues.

Industrialists have complained for decades that the government lacks a long-term industrial policy. In facing keen competition in the region, in what industries should Hong Kong concentrate? In the past ten to fifteen years, because of the high cost of land and labor, Hong Kong factories have moved to other parts of Southeast Asia such as Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. In recent years, factories have moved across the border to China. By one estimation, factories owned or co-owned by Hong Kong people are employing three million workers in the Pearl River Delta alone!

The service industries have expanded rapidly in recent years. But instead of stepping up its retraining of factory workers who lose their jobs at the rate of 18% per annum, the government imports 12,000 overseas workers per year (excluding domestic helpers).

In order to deal with the brain drain and the rapid expansion in the 1990s, the government expanded tertiary education. By 1996, one in five of those aged between seventeen and twenty will be able to study for degrees. However, there is not much thought given to how students should be molded for society. Does Hong Kong want technocrats who are keen to make money or concerned citizens who want to dedicate themselves to the building of a just and humane society?

Citizens' Rights and Freedoms

Though considered as one of the freest societies in Asia, the people of Hong Kong do not enjoy all of the freedoms accorded by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). By the government's own reckoning, there are twenty pieces of legislation which violate the ICCPR.

All people must carry identity cards. When asked by police officers, one must produce an identity card. Police officers can spot-check anyone on the street and conduct a body search! Many archaic and draconian laws remain. There is the Public Order Ordinance which states that public gatherings and the use of loudspeakers must be approved by the Commissioner of Police, who can lay down any conditions he thinks appropriate. Certainly this is one effective way to crush dissenting views.

When challenged, the law enforcement bodies always claim that they apply those laws sparingly and cautiously. But there have been two cases, under political pressure from China, of protestors who were prosecuted. The controversial film censorship ordinance has also been used by the government to prevent people from showing films that may be embarrassing to China.

At the insistence of the community in Hong Kong, the Bill of Rights was enacted in June, 1991. The Bill of Rights copied the ICCPR almost word for word, but left out key provisions on political rights and the right of self-determination. Hong Kong citizens are deprived of the right to choose their own governor and the majority of the legislature is appointed or elected without public involvement. When Britain and China negotiated the future of Hong Kong, Hong Kong people were not consulted. China has threatened to repeal the Bill of Rights after 1997.

Because China is displeased with the enactment of the Bill of Rights, the Hong Kong government is still reluctant to set up a Human Rights Commission which it promised three years ago. Without the Commission, the Bill of Rights will only be slightly more than a piece of decor. There is no mechanism which ensures that all existing laws which contravene the Bill of Rights will be amended, which brings the authorities to court when they violate citizens basic rights, or which promotes full-scale of human rights education.

Despite the fact that Hong Kong is one of the most modern cities in the world, inequalities between men and women exist and are

defended openly by those that have benefitted from the discrimination. There are blatantly discriminatory laws. Women cannot work in certain jobs in industry. Women are pushed toward secretarial work and certain jobs are obviously for men only. Just this year women were allowed to enter ambulance and fire(men) training courses for the first time. In the absence of a will, women in the rural areas cannot inherit their father's estate. Concerned groups are pressuring the government to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and to set up a Women's Commission.

Other Social Problems

While there is no evidence that the crime rate is on the rise, there are more violent crimes involving guns and hand grenades. Reportedly, most of these are Vietnamese produced weapons, and some of the robbers come from the mainland. Hong Kong police and the Public Security Bureau (PSB) in China are working together to check the upsurge in violent crime. The PSB has had a liaison team stationed in Hong Kong since the middle of 1993.

Like all cities in the world, Hong Kong has contributed to the breakdown of the family. Few children in Hong Kong are properly raised. The alienation between parent and child is the major factor in student suicides. In the first two weeks of 1993, four cases were reported.

But the most worrisome social problem is corruption. ICAC did a wonderful job in stamping out corruption in the 1980s. But as people face an uncertain future, the desire to make more money is on everybody's mind. ICAC reported that in the first half of 1993, there was an increase of 30% in reported cases of corruption. Disclosures of ICAC cases indicated that half of them involved civil servants, in particular, from the disciplined forces such as the police, customs and immigration departments.

A Less Caring Community

In the 1970s, Governor MacLehose's vision was to build a caring community in Hong Kong. The 1970s are viewed as a time when all kinds of social services aimed at the young, the sick, and the less privileged were expanded. Then, people donated generously to charitable organizations, voluntary agencies and the Community Chest. However, today there are signs that people are less generous, tolerant and caring.

In 1993, residents in Laguna City objected to the building of a halfway house for ex-mental patients in their housing estate. Residents of Tung Tau Estate staged an ugly scene when they tried to block the opening of a residential center for mentally handicapped young people. They broke the windows, the door and the signboards of the center. Obscene slogans were painted all over the walls. These events are an indication of an increased intolerance toward others.

All in all, Hong Kong is a dynamic territory. Its people are intelligent and hard-working, however, they are rather self-seeking. The riots in 1967 exposed the fact that people were in need of an identity. The 1997 issue highlighted the fact that Hong Kong people were extremely unsure of Hong Kong's future. Therefore, they tend to withdraw and are more concerned with advancing their own interests. If this continues, the social fabric will break down. Hong Kong society may disintegrate.

II

BRITAIN'S POLICY ON HONG KONG

Borrowed Place, Borrowed Time

A Territory on Loan

First, a bit of history. Sparsely inhabited for centuries, Hong Kong mostly attracted farmers and fisher-folk as settlers. In 1841, after Britain defeated China in the first opium war, Hong Kong Island (alias Victoria) was occupied by the British military. In the treaty of Nanjing in 1842, the island was officially ceded permanently to Britain. China granted the Kowloon Peninsula and Stonecutter Island to the British, also permanently, following another defeat in the second Anglo-Chinese war which ended in 1860.

In the Second Convention of Beijing in 1898, Britain successfully negotiated a 99-year lease for the territory between the Kowloon Peninsula and the Shenzhen River, as well as two hundred and thirty-five islands. This was later named the New Territories. The New Territories consist of slightly more than ninety percent of the land in the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong which has approximately four hundred square miles or about one thousand square kilometers.

Since the turn of the century, the New Territories have become an integral part of Hong Kong. Hong Kong and Kowloon depend on this land mass for water and food. So it is correct to assume that from 1898 onwards, the entire territory of Hong Kong has been on loan from China. As the title of Richard Hughes' book suggested so tellingly, Hong Kong is a "borrowed place" living on "borrowed time."

An Entreport

Britain's acquisition of Hong Kong was not for a military purpose,

like Gibraltar. Nor was it an outlet for British settlers, like Australia and New Zealand. Neither was it acquired for its natural resources, like many Asian and African colonies. Britain's acquisition of Hong Kong was mainly for trade. All along Britain had wanted to trade with China. Hong Kong was an ideal gateway to China. It had an excellent harbor and was adjacent to China. So from the days of the East India Company to today's Jardine's and Swire's, Hong Kong has been serving as the most important link between Britain and China.

Later, Hong Kong widened its trading activities. Southeast Asian countries and the United States of America, in particular, used Hong Kong as a base to trade with China. As Hong Kong has practically no natural resources, its survival depends entirely on the import and re-export trade. Hong Kong has helped China to export its manufactured goods and natural resources to the rest of the world. Hong Kong has also helped many industrialized nations trade with China. With almost a quarter of the world's population, China is certainly one of the largest markets in the world.

A Place for Transients

Since its beginning as an entreport, Hong Kong had to depend on China. The British rulers came to set up a system, which though largely in the rulers' favor, was accepted by those who chose to come and work in the territory. The ruled were all Chinese who came from South China to make a better life, not so much for themselves, but for their families back home. Hong Kong not only depended on China for a supply of talented and hard-working laborers and office workers, but also for food, water and other supplies.

Until recent years, perhaps as late as the 1960s, most Hong Kong Chinese residents considered the mainland to be their "motherland." They belonged to it. Hong Kong was only their transitional home. Many came alone to find work and left their wives and children at home. That explained why, after they retired, many would go back. The more ambitious, after a while in Hong Kong, sought opportunities

overseas. Hong Kong has always been a transient place, not only for expatriates, but also mainland Chinese. Few families have their roots in Hong Kong.

A Buffer in Chinese Conflicts

In the past century, China has gone through many upheavals, notably the overturning of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and then, the Communist Party takeover in 1949. Both of these events involved long struggles. Despite the fact that Britain maintained its neutrality throughout, it allowed Hong Kong to harbor Chinese revolutionaries, notably Sun Yat Sen (the leader of the 1911 revolution) and Zu De (a former president of modern China). Some came to take a break; but others were driven out, and therefore sought refuge in the territory. (It is interesting to take note that the father of the modern Republic of the Philippines, Jose Rizal, also took refuge in Hong Kong in the 1880s).

It was also true that unintentionally Hong Kong was a major supply base for revolutionary activities in China. Hong Kong has also served as a buffer in practically all recent internal conflicts and struggles and is where victims and their families have sought shelter. Despite all of this, Britain was always careful not to allow Hong Kong to embarrass China. This explains why soon after the Second World War, when Governor Mark Young presented a blueprint for constitutional reform in Hong Kong which gave more say to the locals, London decided to turn it down, for fear of sending China the signal that Britain wanted to grant Hong Kong independence.

Because of Hong Kong, it was difficult for China to be isolated entirely from the West. China may not have wanted total isolation. Hong Kong has always served as an important base for China to get its modernization ideas, most of which originally come from the West.

British Interests in China

Despite the fact that in terms of a market for manufactured goods Britain has little to gain from the territory except perhaps airplane landing

rights and construction or consulting contracts for British firms, Hong Kong is useful to Britain as a stepping stone to China. General estimates are that Britain now has about US\$100 billion invested in South China. Its total exports to China this year will be close to US\$10 billion (five percent of its total exports). Britain appreciates Hong Kong's value as one of the most important financial centers in the world. There is no doubt that the British government wanted to keep Hong Kong as its colony after 1997.

After the opening up of China in 1979, Governor Murray MacClehose was invited to visit China. The British foreign office urged him to raise the issue regarding Hong Kong's future when he met with Deng Xiaoping, the supreme leader of China. Reportedly, Deng was caught off-guard. Nevertheless, he managed to give MacClehose the following answer: China would resume the sovereignty of Hong Kong no later than 1997 and that all investors could put their hearts at rest, inferring that China would protect their business interests.

For fear of causing an alarm in Hong Kong on his return, MacClehose disclosed only the second part of Deng's message. But in the meantime, London had gotten the message that Deng had set a deadline to resume sovereignty over Hong Kong. So, Britain went ahead and made preparations for its eventual withdrawal.

The Nationality Issue

In 1962, because of the influx of refugees to the United Kingdom from the former British colonies in Africa and Asia, the British Government adopted stringent immigration laws, depriving Hong Kong citizens, despite the fact that they were born in British territory, the right of abode in the United Kingdom.

In 1981, the British Parliament passed the Nationality Act. Without prior consultation or formal announcements afterwards, the Act changed the status of all Hong Kong citizens into British Dependent Territory Citizens. In 1986, the Hong Kong (British Nationality) Order legally rendered the 3.25 million people born in Hong Kong stateless. So step

by step, the British government abdicated its constitutional as well as moral responsibilities towards its citizens, born in its own territory. They were stripped of their right of abode and their right of entry into the British Isles, and finally the inherent right of having a nationality. The latter contravenes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which says every person has a right to Nationality (Article 15).

British Considerations

After the violent crackdown of the democratic movement in China on June 4, 1989, a group of community and Christian leaders formed the “Hong Kong People Saving Hong Kong Campaign.” They lobbied hard in London for the British Government to live up to its moral as well as legal responsibilities. One request was to give back the right of abode to all Hong Kong citizens. They argued eloquently that few Hong Kong citizens wanted to immigrate to the British Isles. But rather, they desperately wanted a first class passport so that in case something went wrong after 1997, they could leave. A British passport would serve as a boost of confidence, and would entice many to stay.

Sometimes, the British government has been accused of being racist. Why, of the 8 million citizens now living in British territories outside the British Isles, only the 3.25 million born in Hong Kong are denied a full British passport? The Portuguese government is much more reasonable and generous to their citizens in Macau. The Portuguese enclave is to be handed back to China in 1999. All the 100,000 people born in Macau have been given a Portuguese passport. In other words, since 1992 those 100,000 people hold a European Community Passport. In theory, they can decide to live in any of the European Community countries, the United Kingdom included!

It is widely believed that the major reason why Britain refused to give all Hong Kong citizens British passports was because Britain did not want to offend China. Other than the nationality considerations, Britain was also concerned that if Hong Kong Chinese were given British passports as insurance they would overcome their fear and would stand

up and fight for what they believed.

Localized Administration

The second measure Britain adopted to prepare for an eventual withdrawal from Hong Kong was the introduction of a plan to hand the power of government back to the people. Soon after MacClehose's return from Beijing in 1979, the British Government took steps to set up nineteen district boards. The White Paper (policy paper) on District Administration in Hong Kong was published in January, 1981; and the first district board elections took place in September, 1982. These were direct elections on a one person one vote basis.

In reality, District Boards are not part of the central government. Their major function is to advise the government on district needs and affairs. But District Boards do engage Hong Kong people in the political process. Campaigning and elections are always a valuable lesson in political and democratic education.

Representative Government

Immediately after the fate of Hong Kong was sealed in the summer of 1984, the Hong Kong government published a Green Paper (consultation paper) on "The Further Development of Representative Government in Hong Kong." It was published as a White Paper after the Sino-British agreement regarding the future of Hong Kong was initialled. The November, 1984 White Paper had a clearly stated aim: "To develop progressively a system of government the authority for which is firmly rooted in Hong Kong, which is able to represent authoritatively the views of the people of Hong Kong, and which is more directly accountable to the people of Hong Kong." The White Paper even suggested that a small number of seats in the legislature be returned by direct election in 1988 and thereafter "...building up to a significant number of directly elected members by 1997." But later it was discovered that China was displeased with this handing of the legislative power to the people and applied fierce pressure on the British

Government behind the scenes. As a result there were no direct elections in the Legislative Council (Legco) in 1988 despite the strong support of the Hong Kong people.

There is little time left before the transfer, and therefore little Britain can do in terms of preparation. Britain has started far too late, especially in terms of planting a fully democratic system in Hong Kong.

Sino-British Accord

A Further Lease

Margaret Thatcher and her cabinet wanted to prolong British rule of Hong Kong. In September, 1982, Thatcher went to Beijing to meet with Deng Xiaoping. Thatcher started to argue that the 1842 Nanjing Treaty and the 1860 Beijing Convention had given Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula to the British in perpetuity. Therefore, the treaties could not be renegotiated. Since the lease of the New Territories was due to expire in 1997, Thatcher asked Deng to lease the territory to Britain for a price China deemed fair. Deng answered that to begin with, the People's Republic of China would not recognize those "unequal" treaties. After a few heated exchanges, Thatcher conceded. Next, she suggested that the territory be returned to China, but in return, China would allow Britain to continue to rule Hong Kong for an extended period of time. Again Deng refused. The meeting ended on an unhappy note. Still shaken by Deng's remarks, Thatcher fell in front of the TV cameras when she walked down the stairs in front of the Great Hall of the People.

Hard Bargaining

Both Britain and China wanted to settle the Hong Kong issue as quickly and as amiably as possible. Obviously they did not want to harm Hong Kong. Hong Kong's existence was beneficial to both

countries. China, obsessed with “territorial integrity,” not only wanted to get back Hong Kong, but Macau and Taiwan as well. If by reverting to China, Hong Kong’s stability and prosperity suffer, then Taiwan will never concede to reunification.

So with this in mind, both sides went into negotiations. It was difficult in the beginning. Britain asked for a continuing role in Hong Kong after China took over. China said no, at which point the negotiations almost broke down. The Hong Kong stock market plummeted, and the Hong Kong dollar fell to such a low that Hong Kong people went wild. Many even went to supermarkets and bought whatever they could lay their hands on.

After weeks, both sides came to their senses. Britain gave up the idea of trying to maintain some form of political presence and participation in Hong Kong after 1997. In return, China pledged to let Hong Kong have some form of self-rule.

Finally, after twenty-two rounds of talks over a year and a half, an agreement was reached. This was in the form of a Joint Declaration, which outlined the way in which China would resume sovereignty over Hong Kong.

The Agreement

The Sino-British Agreement on the future of Hong Kong consists of a Joint Declaration, three annexes (on China’s basic policies regarding Hong Kong; on the setting up of a joint liaison group; and on land leases and the setting up of a land commission), as well as an exchange of memoranda regarding the citizenship of the people of Hong Kong.

These are the essentials:

1. Hong Kong will be a Special Administrative Region (SAR), whose government will be given highly autonomous status with the exception of defense and foreign affairs. It shall be given executive, legislative and judicial power, including that of final adjudication.
2. The people of Hong Kong will constitute its own

government. The chief executive, a Hong Kong citizen appointed by the central government in Beijing will be accountable to the elected legislature.

3. The economic, legal and social system in Hong Kong and its citizens way of life will remain in force for fifty years after 1997.

4. The Hong Kong S.A.R. can use "Hong Kong, China" to participate in international economic and cultural activities and can conclude relevant agreements.

5. In order to maintain a smooth transition, the two countries will set up a Joint Liaison Group which shall continue to work until January 1, 2000.

6. A Land Commission will be set up to deal with land leases and other related matters in Hong Kong once the agreement comes into effect in June, 1985.

7. All "China compatriots" in Hong Kong will become Chinese nationals on July 1, 1997. Those born in Hong Kong before that date might continue to hold a British national (overseas) passport, but will not be entitled to consular protection.

Eighty-one percent of the people in Hong Kong said in November, 1984 that they could accept the agreement.

Problem of Implementation

However, in the summer of 1987, according to all major opinion polls, only around twenty percent said they supported the agreement. Why this big change?

The underlying spirit of the Sino-British Agreement was that both governments pledged to respect and honor the wishes of the people of Hong Kong. The first test of this spirit came in July, 1985 when China declared it would build a nuclear power plant in Daya Bay, less than forty kilometers from Kowloon. The issue was particularly sensitive to Hong Kong people because only three months earlier was the

Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster. Suppose there were a similar accident at Daya Bay. Where would the six million people flee? The Pacific Ocean surrounds Hong Kong.

More than one million people in Hong Kong signed a petition to ask China not to build a nuclear power plant so close to Hong Kong. China snubbed the representatives of the campaign and went ahead and built it. It started to generate electricity in October, 1993. Furthermore, the British government refused to make official representations to China on behalf of Hong Kong despite a strong plea.

The second test came soon after. The British government had given its blessings to the Hong Kong government to progressively develop a representative government in Hong Kong. The White Paper of 1984 suggested that in 1988 some members of the Legco would be returned by direct election. But China objected vehemently. Britain bowed to Chinese pressure and scrapped their plan for introducing direct elections in 1988, despite majority support for the idea.

At that point in time, the Sino-British Joint Declaration had not strengthened the confidence of the Hong Kong people and it also failed to strengthen the Sino-British relationship.

Impact of June 4

The violent crackdown on the democratic movement in China represented by the massacre in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 and the arrests and persecutions afterwards, not only shocked the people of Hong Kong, but also put a strain on the Sino-British relationship. Britain was forced to join the international community in condemning China and enforcing sanctions on China. The Joint Liaison Group stopped its work on Hong Kong's transitional arrangements. Hong Kong became a temporary refuge for Chinese students and intellectuals who participated in the democratic movement in China.

The people of Hong Kong completely lost confidence in China after June 4, became desperate and turned to Britain for help. Hong Kong people made three concrete demands on Britain:

1. To restore full citizenship to all people born in the British territory.
2. To enact a Bill of Rights.
3. To speed up the pace of democracy.

Unfortunately in that crucial moment in history, the British government failed to live up to its moral as well as legal responsibilities towards the 5.8 million people in Hong Kong. Britain once again lost the support of the people of Hong Kong and weakened its position in future dealings with China.

Governor Wilson's Plan

In order to deal with the unprecedented crisis of confidence, Governor David Wilson (Governor from April, 1987 to July, 1992, now Lord Wilson) announced in his October, 1989 policy speech that the government planned to spend HK\$127 billion to build a new airport and to improve its port facilities (the Port and Airport Development Strategy or PADS). This project was to take seven years.

Together with the Hong Kong elite, Wilson also fought hard to ask the British government to grant key personnel in Hong Kong the "right of abode" in the United Kingdom. The latter yielded some results. Fifty thousand senior civil servants, professionals and business people and their family members were granted full British passports. The official argument was that Hong Kong needs these people. A full British passport would motivate them to stay rather than to leave and seek citizenship elsewhere. This naturally was a big disappointment to the millions who were not eligible!

At Wilson's personal intervention, a Bill of Rights was enacted in June, 1991. It was a watered down bill; its scope was not even up to international standards. It was not given supremacy over other laws, nor was it given a status which made it more difficult to revise or repeal. It totally ignored the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It even did not include all of the clauses in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The right of self-

determination (Article 1 of ICCPR) was omitted. And so were remedies for violations of rights by officials (Article 2 Section 3a of ICCPR).

China's Reactions

In chemistry, when there is an action, there is always a reaction. So it is in international politics. The British-Hong Kong government took some measures to try to deal with the crisis in the aftermath of the Beijing massacre and the “white terror” (arrests and executions) which followed. China viewed the British actions as a negative judgment on what it did in its own territory. The “unofficial” harboring of Chinese dissidents in Hong Kong and the massive demonstrations against the Chinese Communist Party also added fuel to the situation. China protested. As a result, the British-Hong Kong government changed course again. The political advisor of the Hong Kong government (equivalent to the foreign minister) wrote a letter to the Hong Kong branch of the New China News Agency (NCNA), the de facto Chinese consulate in Hong Kong, assuring the Chinese that the British-Hong Kong government was still friendly to China.

The letter dated October 26, 1989 reads: “The Hong Kong government has no intention of allowing Hong Kong to be used as a base for subversive activities against the People’s Republic of China. The NCNA will have noticed the arrest of members of the April 5 action group outside their national day reception. They will also have noted that the October 10 celebration passed off in a low-key way, and that the Hong Kong government has recently rejected a proposal for a permanent site for a replica statue of democracy. No group in Hong Kong has any more tolerance than the law allows. The Hong Kong government will continue to have a prudent regard for the special circumstances of Hong Kong and the interests and concerns of the Chinese government.”

Does this sound like appeasement? Indeed, in order to show its sincerity to China, the Hong Kong government prosecuted five leading democrats for staging a sit-in in February, 1990 on the Star Ferry

concourse to protest China's high handed treatment of Hong Kong. After a short spell, during the summer and fall of 1989, of adopting a more "confrontational stance" on China, Britain changed course again. Many conjectured it was due to the influence of a group of "old China hands" in its foreign office like Percy Craddock, Robin McLaren, and the Hong Kong governor. Their argument was that in order to get anywhere in China, you have to "give face" to the Chinese officials first. Once the Chinese consider you unfriendly, that's the end of the day.

Of course, the British policy on China was somewhat influenced by the big business tycoons who wanted to trade in China. They did push their government to be friendly with officials in China.

The Airport Agreement

It was in this spirit of cooperation that "A Memorandum of Understanding Concerning the Construction of the New Airport in Hong Kong and Related Questions" was reached between Britain and China on June 30, 1991. This agreement which provided a say for China in the building of the new airport, threatened the autonomy which was promised, for it gave China a way to interfere in Hong Kong affairs. This was a step further away from Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong. The agreement stipulated that a member of the future Airport Authority will be reserved for a Chinese official from the Bank of China, who would serve as the vice-chairman of the Airport Authority.

But since the British as well as the Hong Kong governments seemed to be eager to build the new airport (much more eager than the Hong Kong public who were never consulted), they were prepared to pay a price. The price, as always, will eventually be borne by the Hong Kong people. No wonder many view Hong Kong people as the victims in the dealings between Britain and China. A year after Margaret Thatcher left the Prime Minister's office, it was reported that she felt a bit guilty for not doing enough for Hong Kong. That was an understatement!

To build the airport the British also had to pay a price. John Major, the British Prime Minister, had to go to Beijing in September, 1991 to co-sign the document with Li Peng, the Chinese Premier. Reportedly, Major was annoyed by being the first head of government to go to Beijing and shake hands with Li after June, 1989. Li was responsible for the massacre in Tiananmen Square.

As we look back on the events of the period between 1984 and 1992, we can say that yes a joint accord was reached between the two governments, but time and again, they have jointly violated it, and rendered it irrelevant.

An Honorable Withdrawal

Patten as the Last Governor

It was widely reported that several influential business tycoons were very upset at Wilson's wavering in handling the Sino-British relationship. First by announcing unilaterally the PADS project and then, by championing the "right of abode" issue. Wilson lost his job less than a year after Major went to Beijing to sign the airport agreement.

In April 1992, Major announced that he had asked Chris Patten to be the governor of Hong Kong. For the last century and a half, Britain had either sent an official from the Colonial Service or the Foreign Office to be the governor of Hong Kong. Patten is not a career diplomat. He is a politician, a cabinet minister under both Thatcher and Major. His last job was the Chairman of the ruling Conservative party. Why send a political heavyweight who is also a close friend of John Major, the Prime Minister, and Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Minister, to Hong Kong to be its last governor? Why is Hong Kong suddenly so important to Britain?

The logical answer lies in the fact that in the second half of the transitional period, a great many important arrangements need to be

made. These arrangements are not necessarily related to the future development of Hong Kong. Some are related to British interest in Hong Kong after 1997. An orderly departure by the British is not only good for Hong Kong, but for Britain as well. Certainly, Patten came to arrange for an honorable withdrawal by the British government. This withdrawal necessarily involves the building of a system in Hong Kong which without the British official presence, nevertheless can enhance British national interest in the area.

An Accountable Government

Patten, named by Douglas Hurd, as one of the top politicians in Europe, certainly showed his colors upon his arrival in Hong Kong. His first full day of work was on the streets. He went to the busiest district in Kowloon to talk to men and women on the street. He hugged babies and shook the hands of hundreds of people. Soon he became immensely popular. He is much more accessible than all the previous governors. Many people genuinely like him.

One important thing he does is to show that his government is an accountable government, accountable to the legislature (monthly he goes to the Legco to answer questions) and ultimately to the people of Hong Kong. In order to drive home this point, in his second policy speech delivered on October 6, 1993, a full list of actions taken against pledges from a year before was included. He has given full details in the progress report on undertakings related to his 1992 policy speech. In other words, Patten showed the way for future HKSAR governments. For according to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, the HKSAR chief executive is accountable to the elected legislature. Patten has set standards for good government.

Constitutional Reform Proposals

When Patten arrived, he got word that China did not want him to increase the number of directly elected members in the Legco. He was told that he must not appoint leading liberal legislators Martin Lee and

Szeto Wah to the Executive Council and that he must maintain an executive-led government (i.e. he must not give more power to Legco). In formulating his constitutional reform package, Patten certainly adhered to the Chinese demands. What he planned to do was to widen the franchise of the functional constituencies in Legco and constitute the election committee from members who are directly elected to a district board or a municipal council. Patten also suggested that, as of 1994, the appointment system in district boards be totally abolished; the voting age be lowered from twenty-one to eighteen; and the single-seat single-vote voting method be adopted.

All these measures are attempts to make elected offices more representative and hence more credible. In fact, what Patten wanted to install is “a more credible legislature, fairly and openly elected” (a quote from Patten’s second policy speech). According to Patten, Hong Kong’s prosperity and freedom depend on the rule of law, which in turn depends on a credible legislature. In a letter to this author dated October 15, 1993, Patten argued, “What I am trying to do is not to speed up the pace of democracy, but to ensure that the agreed powers would be fair and credible.”

China’s Concerns

To begin with, China was extremely suspicious of the British for sending such a high powered politician to be the last governor of Hong Kong. When Patten arrived, instead of making friends with the Chinese authorities, notably the Hong Kong NCNA officials and China’s Hong Kong and Macau Office officials, he made friends with the people of Hong Kong. China had urged Patten to visit Beijing earlier, rather than later. But Patten decided to visit Beijing only after he delivered his first policy speech more than three months after his arrival. China was annoyed at this.

Patten made proposals in his policy speech without consulting China. This deviated from the previous practice of the governors of Hong Kong, which included Edward Youde (1982-86) and David

Wilson (1987-92). Whenever they made any important policy proposals, Youde and Wilson would first consult China. If China objected, they would either amend the proposals or even give up. The issue of direct elections in Legco in 1988 suffices to illustrate this. But Patten, fully aware of what China would do, went ahead and made known what he wanted to do. Then he reasoned with the people of Hong Kong and appealed for their support. China disliked this immensely, because it could no longer conduct business with Britain in secret and make secret deals which were to China's advantage.

Furthermore, Patten's proposals, though extremely mild, would make China's control of the legislature and district boards difficult, if not impossible. Take the textile and garment functional constituency as an example. Instead of allowing only the factories to vote (one vote for each factory), Patten proposed that all those engaged in that industry (totalling 251,000) could vote. The 1991 election experience demonstrated that China cannot control the general public. Liberals won a landslide victory in the election. Obviously opening up functional constituencies is bad news for China. In the functional constituency elections, Patten proposed to allow 2,700,000 citizens (with the exception of homemakers and students) a second vote. (Everyone already has one vote in the election of geographically based Legco members.)

Attacks on Patten

Patten angered China on yet another count. After putting forth his proposals, he visited Europe, North America and Japan. As expected he got endorsements and firm support from all these countries. The United States President, Bill Clinton, went all out to receive Patten in the Oval office. Patten was accused by China of trying to internationalize Hong Kong.

Immediately China mounted ferocious attacks and smear campaigns on Patten. Patten was accused of being "a man guilty for a thousand years" for damaging the Sino-British relationship as well as

an “international prostitute” for selling something evil to the group of seven industrialized nations.

On the less irrational side, Patten’s proposals according to China, violated the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law (the mini-constitution for the future HKSAR) and the seven diplomatic exchanges between the two countries of January/February, 1990. To be fair, Patten’s proposals did not violate the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. The diplomatic exchanges were not agreements. They were an exchange of ideas. But in spirit, China might have a point, for Patten did not respect the spirit of both documents which called for a spirit of close cooperation between the two countries.

Patten, together with Major and Hurd did change the style of dealing with China. They were shrewd enough to see that the “caving in” style got them nowhere. As Patten has been fond of saying, an airport agreement was signed two years ago, but where’s the airport now? Hindsight says that they might have underestimated China’s reaction to this more “confrontational attitude.” There is no way China can accept this new attitude.

Sino-British Row

For almost six months, October 1992 to March 1993, official contacts between the two countries were almost completely suspended. At the request of the people of Hong Kong, talks finally began in April over the 1994-95 elections in Hong Kong. However, after seventeen rounds of talks, there were few achievements. The Chinese negotiators insist Patten’s proposals must be withdrawn before substantial talks could take place. The British side maintains that the Chinese must first agree on the through train principle (meaning after 1997, the election systems as well as those elected can continue to 1999). Now, there is a real danger that the talks will break down, and both sides are evaluating what this will mean. Surprisingly, most of the people in Hong Kong do want the Sino-British talks to continue. At the same time, these people are pleading with the Chinese to separate the political row from the

economic considerations.

So far, China has yet to give its blessings on the building of the number nine container terminal or the financing of the Chek Lap Kok Airport. Earlier, China pledged not to mix politics and economics. But in reality, China is reluctant to do so. China is worried that the British firms may get the major contracts in the large projects. Besides, China wants to hold onto these trump cards in order to get the British to behave. The British cabinet meeting in early November set the tone on how far Britain wants to go in terms of redrawing a bottom line. Patten's second policy speech hinted that he was willing to give in to some of China's demands.

Too Little, Too Late

Britain missed a golden opportunity to install a representative government in Hong Kong in the 1970s when Hong Kong's economy was booming and China began to open its doors. After the signing of the Joint Declaration when the Sino-British relationship was very good, Britain should have pushed for direct elections in the Legislature. In a letter to this author in May, 1988, Edward Heath, the former British Prime Minister, agreed that direct elections should be introduced "sooner rather than later so that Hong Kong people can get used to it."

Now, Britain has to rely on the people of Hong Kong to support its plan for an honorable withdrawal. Again, the people of Hong Kong may support such an endeavor if Britain gives them "the right of abode." With only a second-class passport, Hong Kong people are afraid to stand up against China, no matter how unreasonably it behaves. Many local community leaders and politicians are afraid of offending China. Therefore, they have become pro-China. China certainly has made many friends in Hong Kong over the years. But many of them are those who do not see eye to eye with China, and dare not speak up. Many have adopted a self-censoring attitude, "don't say or do things which might annoy China." Worse still, many prominent Hong Kong citizens have taken a highly suppressive attitude towards their colleagues

in an attempt to gain a few political points from China. Few people in Hong Kong dare to stand up and fight for Hong Kong's interests.

It has been suggested to Chris Patten that his constitutional reform proposals should be put to the people of Hong Kong. Surprisingly, Patten did not like the idea. He said it should be the responsibility of Legco. But Legco cannot represent the views of the people of Hong Kong. Many appointed members have already turned their loyalty to China! The suspicion is that the real reason for not holding a referendum on constitutional reforms in Hong Kong is to avoid another battle with China. China already stated its position that any constitutional change in Hong Kong is a matter between China and Britain. It is adamantly opposed to the idea of people's self-determination.

A More Participatory Society

The best legacy Britain can give to Hong Kong is to strengthen the social fabric. This is far from being a just society. Politically, only a handful enjoy meaningful participation. Important economic decisions and cultural gifts are being monopolized by a very few people.

It has been shown that Britain missed a golden opportunity to open up its political process. On issues pertaining to the livelihood of the masses, Patten has also failed. In his first policy speech entitled, "Our Next Five Years: The Agenda for Hong Kong," as well as his second "Hong Kong: Today's Success, Tomorrow's Challenges," Patten dealt at length with many issues affecting people's livelihood. Education, welfare, medical and health care and housing were dutifully mentioned. His major proposal was to allocate more funds to much needed social services. However, he shied away from suggesting ways to tackle many of the highly complex social problems, like the increasing crime rate, corruption, and the poor state of the educational system.

There is a dire need to overhaul Hong Kong's social policies. The tax structure also deserves a thorough review. The last review was almost seventeen years ago. Social services and taxation are two effective means to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor in any

society. Despite a strong plea by the wider community of Hong Kong, which includes management and labor unions, liberals and the pro-China community, the government has turned a deaf ear to pleas for the introduction of a comprehensive social security system.

Besides the failure to install fundamental democratic institutions and more equitable and just social structures, the British-Hong Kong government also has failed to ensure that citizens' rights and freedoms are safeguarded. For two years, despite constant reminders by the liberal legislators and concerned groups in Hong Kong, the government still refuses to establish a Human Rights Commission. Without this commission, there is no effective way to ensure that existing laws which violate the Bill of Rights are repealed or amended. There is no effective way to bring the government to court if it violates citizens' basic rights. Finally, there is no effective body to promote community-wide human rights education.

Overall, history may very well judge the British government as having failed in its attempts to arrange an honorable withdrawal from its Crown Colony of Hong Kong in 1997.

III

THE INTENTIONS OF CHINA

Stability and Prosperity

An Engine in China's Growth

In 1979, immediately after the reopening of China, several special economic zones (SEZ) were set up in Southern China. Eventually these SEZs became the engine of growth for China's ambitious modernization programs. Hong Kong is the engine driving the rapid growth in Southern China, especially in the Pearl River Delta.

In the 1970s, Hong Kong small business people ventured across the border and sought business opportunities in Southern China. This entrepreneurial spirit helped to stimulate the business minded Chinese. Many were awakened to the opportunities available in starting or joining a small business. In the process, not only did they receive self satisfaction, but also money and an improvement in their standard of living. Eventually, this entrepreneurial spirit brought forth economic reforms throughout China.

Throughout the 1980s, China earned thirty to forty percent of its foreign exchange through Hong Kong. Most of the international financing arrangements for China's big development projects were completed in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has also been providing China with the skills and advanced technology necessary for China's modernization program.

Hong Kong is useful to China in yet another way. By sharing its experiences it can assist China in setting up a financial system which is based on the rule of law and a strong civil service. Hong Kong can also contribute its expertise in combatting corruption. Corruption is one of the most serious problems in China. Even top Chinese leaders reckon

that if corruption is not contained, what is at risk is not only investors' confidence and social stability, but ultimately the fate of the nation.

China has decided to employ all the means at their disposal to try to maintain the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. Only if Hong Kong is stable and prosperous can it be helpful to China. On the other hand, if Hong Kong's stability and prosperity are damaged by China's annexation, the Chinese hopes of eventually reuniting with Taiwan will be dashed.

Insulation From China's Turmoil

For forty years, China was careful not to allow its internal troubles to damage Hong Kong. In 1962, when the Hong Kong government protested that too many mainlanders were coming to Hong Kong, China immediately closed the border. Subsequently, the two sides reached an agreement on cross border travel that includes the immediate repatriation of undocumented Chinese caught in the New Territories and a quota of 75 legal Chinese immigrants to Hong Kong per day. Undocumented immigrants still come in daily. But to a large extent, the problem is solved. This agreement is still in force.

China supplies most of the fresh vegetables and livestock consumed in Hong Kong. The people of Hong Kong benefit from the low prices, not only on food, but on other Chinese merchandise. Half of the water consumed in Hong Kong is pumped from the East River in China. Even at the height of every Sino-British row the water was allowed to flow without serious interruption.

Over the years, China has conducted several nationwide political movements, the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s, the Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976, and the Democratic Movements in 1978 and 1989. These caused countless upheavals. But Zhou Enlai in the earlier years, and Deng Xiaoping after 1978, personally forbade any communist instigated troubles in Hong Kong.

The Chinese authorities have always been cooperative in the fight against crime in Hong Kong. The Public Security Bureau has vowed

not to allow anyone who has committed crimes in Hong Kong a safe haven in China.

After the violent crackdown on the peaceful demonstration in Tiananmen Square, there were reports that capital flowed out of Hong Kong. China decided to pump a lot of money into Hong Kong to help stabilize the economic situation and to strengthen the financial system. Of course, Chinese capital is in Hong Kong because it is a great place to invest. But it is also true that the money is used to ensure the financial stability of the territory.

A Separate Economic Entity

Generally, the world's governments believe that it is difficult to isolate political considerations from economic affairs. But Chinese leaders believe otherwise. They insist politics and economics can be separated. They put this theory into practice by allowing economic reform in China while suppressing political reform. They follow the same rule in Hong Kong. They are insisting on full political control while they are attempting to implement a laissez-faire economic policy.

In fact, this is what the Chinese leaders had in mind when they agreed that Hong Kong's system and way of life will continue for fifty years after 1997. Hong Kong citizens found out later what the communist leadership meant was that macro and micro economic policy was to be left alone. However, the political system is to be tightly controlled.

The Sino-British Accord also stipulated that with the exception of foreign affairs and defence matters, the future HKSAR would have a "highly autonomous status." Hong Kong will continue to have some autonomy. Hong Kong will have the power and authority to negotiate and to conclude trade agreements with other countries. For example, Hong Kong is a member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). China is applying for admission as a full member. China has stated that even after China gets GATT membership, Hong Kong does not have to withdraw from GATT. Both China and Hong Kong are

members of the Asia and Pacific Economic Cooperative (APEC). Three years ago, in the APEC meeting, Qian Qichen, Chinese Deputy Prime Minister cum Foreign Minister sat side by side with Brian Chau, Hong Kong's Trade Secretary.

In the meeting in Seattle in November, 1993, the Chinese delegation was led by Jiang Zemin, the Chinese President and the General Secretary of the Communist Party. China did not object to Hong Kong's participation. The Hong Kong delegation was headed by the Financial Secretary, Hamish McCleod. China has accepted that though now a British Crown Colony and after 1997 a Special Administrative Region of China, Hong Kong will enjoy equal trade status with China. As far as economic interests are concerned, it seems the question of sovereignty does not arise. Of course one can also interpret it to mean that China wants two votes in all the international trade bodies.

Cooperation with Britain

China acknowledged from the outset that it was vital that China seek Britain's full cooperation in Hong Kong's twelve year transitional period (1985-1997). Mechanisms were set up immediately after the ratification of the Sino-British Joint Declaration by the parliaments of both countries. One is the Joint Liaison Group (JLG), another the Lands Commission. While the Lands Commission deals only with the sale of land during the transitional period, the JLG has responsibility for all other issues, except the construction of the new airport and constitutional reform.

China is always suspicious of the British government. To China every move Britain makes on Hong Kong is some sort of conspiracy. They believe that Britain wants to establish their method of government and hence their influence long after 1997. This explains why China was annoyed when Britain attempted to push forward a representative legislature in Hong Kong in 1985. It was quite legitimate for China to ask, why democracy now? After all the British have avoided democracy

for 150 years!

China forced Britain to sign the airport agreement to legitimize its role in all important policy decisions before 1997! China wants to make economic decisions purely based on economic considerations. The fact that China has not given the green light to build the new airport at Chek Lap Kok and the number nine container terminal may have nothing to do with the disagreement on political reforms. The reason may be that China suspects that Britain is trying to monopolize these huge projects at the expense of Hong Kong and to benefit British business. Even at the height of the present row, China agreed to give a franchise to Hong Kong Telecom and Cable Television beyond 1997. China has hinted that even without any agreement on the 1994-1995 electoral arrangements China will still cooperate with Britain on economic matters.

Reliance on Business Tycoons

The rise of the communists in China was possible by the staunch support of the peasants and the workers. In the 1930s and 40s it became obvious that the Nationalist government could no longer address the needs of the masses in China. The government was corrupt. It only served the wealthy few. But soon after the Communists overthrew the Nationalist government, they themselves became self-seeking. Increasingly, like the Nationalists, they were alienated from the poor. They no longer were able to identify with the poor or to provide for the poor.

In Hong Kong's capitalist society, communism had little support. There were a few student leaders and trade unionists who supported the New China in the 1950s and 1960s. However, since China's re-opening in 1979, these people have not been at the front of the pro-China movement.

There were few pro-China business people prior to the decision that China would resume sovereignty over Hong Kong. Since April 1984, practically every leading Chinese business tycoon has had a

change of heart. These shrewd business tycoons knew from the start that if they wanted to continue to do business after 1997, they had no choice but to build good relations with the Chinese cadres in the provinces, and more importantly, with the top leadership in Beijing.

They knew that as China began to open up, cash would be needed. They sent billions of dollars into China. Two new universities were built by Sir Y.K. Pao and Li Ka Shing, the two richest businessmen in Hong Kong. They also invested in public works projects such as highways, housing estates, hotels, etc. These banknotes have worked miracles. These tycoons have built up good relations (guanxi) with many top leaders in China. Whenever they visit China, meetings and dinners with Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Lu Ping are arranged.

The fact that they are listened to by Deng Xiaoping and others does not mean that they can bridge the gap between Hong Kong and China. For one thing, they only speak things pleasing to the ears of the Chinese leaders. Moreover, they themselves may not even know what really is going on in Hong Kong. They know what is best for themselves, but they are blissfully ignorant of what is best for Hong Kong.

Isolation From the Masses

Chinese leaders believe that only wealthy business people and professionals can contribute to the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. They believe that those who demand more democracy and those who constantly hold the government accountable are agitators, who will damage Hong Kong's stability and prosperity. Not only that, Chinese leaders are afraid that democracy in Hong Kong might inspire democratic movements in China. The demand for more democracy in China could mean the end of their rule!

Chinese leaders have been influenced by the dialectical way of thinking. They believe in dualism. Some things are good and others are bad. So are people. The people who concur with their views are friends, those who oppose their views are enemies. Democratic leaders are their enemies. Therefore, there is no way that Chinese leaders can

accept the democratic leaders in Hong Kong. Chinese leaders refuse to communicate with democratic leaders in Hong Kong. When democrats want to petition the Chinese authorities through the New China News Agency (NCNA), the official representative of China in Hong Kong, the front doors are invariably closed before they arrive. There are also numerous cases of Hong Kong people who criticize China not being allowed to enter China even though they hold valid travel documents.

In the final analysis, rejection of the democratic leaders will fail to win the hearts and minds of the majority of the people. After all, the democrats won a landslide victory in the first ever direct elections for the Legislative Council in September, 1991. They are the legitimately chosen representatives of the people. If China chooses to ignore this group of people they will continue to fail to understand Hong Kong and its aspirations.

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One Country, Two Systems

China's National Policy

For 2000 years, two things have been clear in the minds of the emperors, kings and rulers of China. Maintenance of the stability and prosperity of the country and the expansion of China's territory. The second has become "the Greater China" concept since the turn of the Century. Deng Xiaoping has said that China's most important policy is that of territorial integrity. This explains why China does not release its grip on the "autonomous regions" which include Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. Deng also wants to resume sovereignty over Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau before he dies!

Since the reopening of China in 1979, it has experienced rapid economic growth. China became one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The 1.2 billion people were relatively happy and content. Chinese leaders were full of confidence. It was in this heady atmosphere

that China wanted to take concrete steps towards the reintegration of Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan into greater China.

Portugal is willing to hand Macau back to China. Legally speaking, Britain must return the New Territories, 90% of Hong Kong. But Taiwan is the headache. Taiwan has done well in its economic, social and political development. Though Taiwanese are also ethnic Chinese, they are not eager to become a part of communist China.

Sensing the difficulties involved, China came up with the ingenious “One Country, Two Systems” principle. Moreover, they wanted to use Hong Kong as a test case and then, Macau, in 1999. They figure if these tests are successful, Taiwan would be tempted to join greater China.

Basically, the principle calls for only a few changes in Hong Kong and Macau. Both can maintain their systems and way of life. The only changes are to the flag, the garrison, and the governor. Hong Kong and Macau will be highly autonomous with the exception of defense and foreign affairs, and local citizens will constitute their own governments. In other words, the people of Hong Kong and Macau have been promised a great deal mainly because of China’s eagerness to bring Taiwan back into the fold. Taiwan was even promised that it could keep its own military! The people of Hong Kong and Macau have no choice. But the Taiwanese, if they remain firmly backed by the United States will always have a choice.

Additionally, for about 10 years, China has been exceptionally kind to Taiwan. Taiwanese have been allowed and even encouraged to do business in China. And the two governments have even started unofficial negotiations on a few matters. The gap between China and Taiwan has narrowed.

United Front Tactics

Since 1981, China has stepped up its efforts at “making friends” in Hong Kong. This is the key to united front tactics. In the summer of 1983, China sent Xu Jiatun, a member of the Central Committee of the

Communist Party to head the NCNA in Hong Kong. He was to be assisted by Li Zhuwen, a former pastor from the International church in Shanghai and a junior party leader who also speaks fluent English.

When Xu arrived, he dressed, spoke and perhaps even thought like an old style cadre member. But soon after, he changed. He spoke, dressed and thought like a businessman. In his six and a half years in Hong Kong, Xu befriended key people from the business, the professional, and the academic communities as well as senior officials of the Hong Kong government. Xu and Li also won the friendship of church leaders from practically all the major protestant denominations as well as the Roman Catholic Church. Dinners were held at least once a year for each of the professional, business, and church groups. In the 1970s, few community leaders showed up for the National Day celebration. This picture changed drastically. More than one thousand people attended recent National Day receptions. The annual reception on the last day of September has become one of the most important social functions of the year.

After the crackdown on the democratic movement in China and Xu's departure in February, 1990, this picture changed again. The trust Xu had built up diminished. Xu's replacements are less sympathetic than Xu and are far more rigid. Zhou Nan and his lieutenants seem to have forgotten the importance of the "two systems" principle. The present system and the freedoms of Hong Kong citizens must remain if Hong Kong is to continue to develop and contribute to China's modernization.

Hong Kong: A Subversive Base?

During the demonstrations in Beijing and in other cities in China in 1989, Hong Kong's citizens, many old guards of the Communist Party and Xu Jiatun himself supported the demonstrators. Like the Chinese, Hong Kong people were patriotic. They thought that the demands to stamp out corruption and nepotism were reasonable, and indeed, were the only hope for the modernization of China.

Obviously misinformed, Deng personally sanctioned the order to send in the tanks and the People's Liberation Army. The people of Hong Kong were extremely upset. A million people took to the streets on two successive Sundays to denounce the Chinese leadership. The Hong Kong Alliance in the Support of Patriotic and Democratic Movement in China (The Hong Kong Alliance) was formed in June, 1989.

In the following White Terror (arrests of those who took part in the demonstrations and who denounced the Chinese leadership), the Hong Kong Alliance gave full support to those who were put on the "wanted" list in China. It helped hundreds to escape. Many of them now live in the USA and France.

Since 1989, the relationship between China and Hong Kong has deteriorated. At one point, Chinese cadres considered Hong Kong a subversive base. They believed that Hong Kong citizens conducted subversive activities aimed at either overthrowing the Chinese government or at least causing "peaceful evolution." China applied diplomatic pressure on Britain and requested that Britain not allow Hong Kong to become a "subversive base." The British government was sensitive to China's needs and an understanding was reached. But at the same time, the British government did not disband the Hong Kong Alliance.

Britain used the June Fourth event to change its method of dealing with China. In October, 1989, Governor Wilson unilaterally declared that the Hong Kong government would launch a HK\$127 billion Port and Airport Development Strategy (PADS). China vehemently objected. Britain changed course again and decided that China's agreement was necessary. The PADS project dispute ended with the signing of the "memorandum on the building of the new airport and related matters" between John Major, the British Prime Minister, and Li Peng, the Chinese Premier. The Airport Agreement represents total British capitulation to Chinese demands. The British capitulated without a fight and surrendered their power to independently manage Hong

Kong up to 1997.

Patten's Reform Package

In the Spring of 1992, Britain finally realized that caving in to China accomplished nothing. Therefore, John Major, in July of 1992, sent Christopher Patten to be Hong Kong's last governor. As a former cabinet member under both Thatcher and Major, Patten has political clout in Britain. He came not only as the governor of Hong Kong, but he serves as the principal advisor to the British government on China policy. Patten is a close colleague and friend of John Major and Douglas Hurd, and as such, is believed to be in charge of both Hong Kong and China policy. China views Patten's presence with great suspicion. Why deviate from the tradition of sending a junior minister from the foreign office? Why send a political heavyweight?

In his first policy speech on October 7, 1992, Patten put forth proposals to make government more accountable to the people, measures to improve the quality of life of Hong Kong citizens and to make the legislature more representative and credible. It was the last group of proposals which drew fire from the Chinese.

Patten's package on political reforms was limited. He attempted to widen the franchise, so that most Hong Kong citizens over age 18 could have two votes: one in a geographical district and another in a constituency based on their function in society (but homemakers and students would not have a second vote).

China was furious. First, Patten changed the working relationship between the two countries, from behind the scenes consultations and secret deals, to open negotiations. Second, Patten's proposals allow China less of an opportunity to control the results of any election. China believes that Patten is trying to curb Chinese power and influence and simultaneously, he is encouraging Hong Kong people to stand up to China. On both counts, China feels that its sovereignty is being undermined.

Sovereignty is the Issue

Ever since the beginning of the 1982-1984 Sino-British negotiations regarding the future of Hong Kong, China thought that the future of Hong Kong was in the hands of the two sovereign powers. They have constantly maintained that Hong Kong people have no part to play. Edward Youde who was governor from 1982 to 1987, was snubbed when he insisted that he represented Hong Kong. China insists that only China can represent the interests of the people of Hong Kong. China is dead set against the so called three-legged stool. The three-legged stool concept stands for the idea that Hong Kong, as represented by its government, should participate in the negotiations on an equal basis with China and Britain. In drawing up the rules for the Sino-British negotiations regarding the 1994-1995 elections, China insisted that Hong Kong government officials could only serve as advisors to the British team and that whatever the two countries agreed, Britain had to make sure that Legco would pass the agreement unchanged.

The people of Hong Kong resent this. To the majority, there is no question of usurping sovereignty. They have accepted the “one country” concept. All they want to do is to safeguard the “two systems” as provided by China and as enshrined in the Joint Declaration.

Differences Between the Two Systems

When Deng Xiaoping advocated the “one country, two systems” principle (the idea was originated by Marshal Yeh Jianyin), he might not have foreseen the difficulties involved. Few Chinese leaders have ever been exposed to the Hong Kong way of life. In the past forty years, they have travelled on a path which is very different from that of the people of Hong Kong. To them good government is synonymous with tight central control. Personalities are far more important than the rule of law.

Two illustrations of the gap between China and Hong Kong will show the result of these differences. First, Li Hou, the former deputy director of Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office said “appointment”

is a form of “election” when he argued against direct elections in 1988. Second, the Chinese insist that Patten has violated the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and the diplomatic exchanges between the two foreign ministers in 1991, but when challenged, they cannot and will not point to the sections violated. In China, when authorities speak it must be so!

Co-existence between two unequal partners is difficult. China has 200 times the population of Hong Kong. There is no question that China can dictate to Hong Kong at its whim. But in order to allow Hong Kong to continue to grow and be useful to China, China must resist the temptation to habitually interfere in Hong Kong affairs. China must allow Hong Kong to be insulated from China’s desire to micro manage Hong Kong. After all, that is what has been pledged in the 1984 Sino-British agreement.

Against Internationalization

Finally, China is sensitive about the part the international community plays in Hong Kong and in China. China thinks that no country can interfere with the decisions and policies of another country. They believe that there should not be any so called “universal concerns” or universal human rights. China argued as much at the Bangkok Conference prior to the United Nations Human Rights Convention in Vienna held in June, 1993.

Investment from the international community is welcome. But anything more than that is considered to be interference. That is why China ignored the legal community’s plea to invite at least two overseas judges from common law jurisdictions to sit on Hong Kong’s future court of final appeal. That is also why China labelled Patten as a “man of guilt for one thousand years” and a “prostitute” when Patten travelled the world talking to world leaders, including President Bill Clinton. For one hundred and fifty years China has had her sovereignty violated. Now that China has become a powerful country, no other country should dictate to China. Because of this belief, China denies that any country

has a right to play a part in arrangements for Hong Kong's transition from a British Crown Colony to a Chinese Special Administrative Region.

Ultimate Control

Supremacy of Deng Xiaoping

China is a big country with four thousand years of history. With the exception of about thirty years (1911-1949), it has been ruled by dynasties. Most of these dynasties lasted for a couple of hundred years. Emperors or sons of heaven, possessed absolute power and authority. Though most of them were corrupt and seldom answered the cries of their people, Chinese people became used to this ill treatment. However, dynasties were able to provide the stability necessary for governing this vast country.

Following the expulsion of the last emperor, Pu Yi, in 1911, many Chinese dreamed that there would be an end to the succession of dynasties. But, when the communists took over the reins of power in 1949 and declared the birth of a modern China, there was not a trace of evidence that this Chinese dream had materialized. The communist dynasty was firmly established. Mao Zedong was the first emperor. After his death in 1975 and after the notorious ten year cultural revolution ended in 1976, many hoped that China was free at last. But the Communist Party did not let go. Deng Xiaoping became the new emperor. Undoubtedly, under Deng, China has progressed, especially in the area of economics. However, Deng is revered as a demi-god, not because of his leadership and effectiveness, but because leaders want their power confirmed by a higher authority, rather than having it authenticated by the people. Deng holds no official position in either the state, the party, or the military, yet, he must approve all major decisions.

Deng has said repeatedly that he is against any form of personality

cult. Yet this is what is being practiced in China. Deng's three volume biography written by his youngest daughter was released in October, 1993. It was a best seller. Authorities took great pains to encourage people, especially cadres, to study the words of Deng.

The supreme ruler's word, right or wrong, is final. This is believed from top to bottom. Those who dare to challenge it must be prepared to pay a severe penalty. Fang Lizhi, the world renowned astronomer, and his wife were forced into exile. Wei Ginzhan, the most famous Chinese dissident was jailed for fifteen years. Wang Xizhe was also jailed. Liu Binyang was expelled from the Party. None of these have committed any crime even according to the Chinese penal code. The only thing they did was to urge Deng Xiaoping to speed up reforms and liberalization.

Control is the Key

Control is the key to understanding Chinese rulers. The supreme ruler must be in control of the Party. The Party must be in control of the State (to call for the abolition of one party rule in China is high treason). The State machinery must control the people. Chinese leaders are preoccupied with staying in power and expanding power. To hold onto power, Chinese leaders understand that they must have the support of their colleagues, be in full control of the media (the most important propaganda organ) and the military (Mao's observation was that power comes from the barrel of the gun). This is why the military and all the propaganda organs are directly under the control of the Party, not the State. This helps explain the many political maneuvers and dehumanizing movements that aimed to dispose of potential competitors for power.

No Free Hand For Hong Kong

If the Communist leaders do not trust the Chinese people, there is no way they can trust Hong Kong people. They come to Hong Kong to make friends because they will have to rely on those people to run

Hong Kong. But they certainly are not confident enough to make friends who are outspoken critics of their system and the way they make decisions and conduct business. This was obvious when China formed the committee to help draft the Basic Law (the mini-constitution for the HKSAR). Fifty-nine members were appointed. In order to enhance its credibility, twenty-three prominent Hong Kong citizens were included. Most of these Hong Kong appointees were business tycoons. Openly, they all held the same views as the Chinese. Only two had a record of fighting for a more open and accountable government in Hong Kong.

Chinese leaders became more nervous about dealing with the people of Hong Kong after the June Fourth events in 1989. This was evidenced by the strict restrictions placed in the Basic Law which was promulgated by the People's Congress in April, 1990. The Basic Law allows 20 of the 60 legislators to be directly elected in 1997. This varies from the Joint Declaration of 1984 which stated that in 1997, Hong Kong will have an elected legislature. China also denied the "Court of Final Appeal" the right to interpret the Basic Law. This right has been reserved for the standing committee of the People's Congress. Without this right, the highly autonomous status of Hong Kong, as pledged by China, and enshrined in the Joint Declaration will never become a reality.

China turned the screws tighter after the landslide victory by the democrats in the 1991 Legco elections. The Airport Agreement was meant to legitimize China's control over all important matters in the territory. The inclusion of provisions to allow China the final say set the tone for subsequent Chinese dealings with the British.

Convergence and the Through Train

China has insisted that new policies introduced in Hong Kong will have to converge with the Basic Law and the wishes of China. The British government and the Hong Kong people have found this difficult to accept. In the course of rapid growth and development, space and freedom to maneuver have become important. If Hong Kong

accedes to China, it will not be able to grow. The question of convergence is still not resolved.

Soon after Patten's political reform proposals were published in October, 1992, Britain made the "through train" their most important issue. It was important that whatever political arrangements were put in place they must carry on after 1997 to ensure a smooth transition. Furthermore, all politicians elected by the people must continue to serve until the next election in 1999. If the through train principle is accepted, the British efforts to build up Hong Kong as a strategic international city will be considered a success. Moreover, Britain argued, if China starts all over again come 1997, there is no point in further discussions.

The Second Stove

Realizing that Britain may not fully cooperate, China has hand-picked a group of Hong Kong people who are entrusted with the task of governing Hong Kong in 1997. Over the past year and a half, China has invited a total of ninety-three people to be its advisors on Hong Kong affairs. These are wealthy business tycoons, community leaders and a few retired senior civil servants or influential ex-Exco members such as Sir S. Y. Chung and Maria Tam. The appointment of Sir David Akers-Jones, former Chief Secretary, and acting governor for five months after the untimely death of Governor Youde in December, 1986, caused an uproar on the British political scene. It seems that this group, backed by China, have already formed an alternative power base or second stove in Hong Kong.

In July 1993, at the height of the Sino-British row over Patten's proposals, China decided to set up a working panel to chart the course for the Preparatory Working Committee for the HKSAR. This committee is to oversee the transition of power in 1997. Of the fifty-seven members, twenty-seven are experts or party leaders from China, and thirty are prominent Hong Kong citizens. With the exception of three, all serve concurrently as China advisors on Hong Kong affairs. From all indications the panel is helping China to identify issues, analyze

options, and to make recommendations. But the final decision will be made by China. In a way, Hong Kong advisors or panelists are acting as mouthpieces for China. Corporately, they are expected to serve as a rubber stamp. None of these individuals have a record of being critical of China's Hong Kong policies.

China's Trump Cards

China has stepped up its efforts to discern who the "loyalists" are in Hong Kong and it has taken great pains to flush out those who would not toe the line. China warned Hong Kong's civil servants that if they want to retain their jobs after 1997, they should not be "too zealous." China has also issued the same warning to Hong Kong journalists.

A trump card China uses for countries with whom it does not see eye to eye is the granting or withholding of commercial favors. In 1992, when France sold fifteen Mirage jets to Taiwan, China promptly barred all French firms from participating in the building of an underground railway in Guangzhou. When Jardines (the oldest British firm in Hong Kong) supported Patten's proposals, China withheld its endorsement for the building of the number nine container terminal which is to be built by a conglomerate headed by Jardines. There are rumors that China has drawn up a list of British firms which may be banned from doing business in China if Patten decides to send his political reform bill to Legco.

Many question whether it is wise to use economic trump cards. Any unilateral economic sanctions by China will surely spark off a trade war, not only between Britain and China, but possibly by the European Community as well.

Foreign Influence

China has reached a stage where returning to isolation is difficult if not impossible. Moreover, China wants to be a key player on the international scene. Therefore, China must play according to the rules set down by the international community. It is difficult for China to

ignore the expectations of its major trading partners in the West. China must improve on its human rights record and it must also do more to prevent the proliferation of weapons, especially nuclear weapons. It is generally accepted that the respect of human rights and the establishment of open and democratic government will bring stability to a country.

There are indications that China is beginning to respond to the pressure applied by its major trading partners in the West. China has set free prominent political prisoners in its bid for membership in GATT, in its pursuit of most favored nation trade status (MFN) with the United States as well as in its attempt to host the 2000 Summer Olympics.

China cannot escape from the world movement towards allowing people a say in their own destinies. The downfall of the communist dictators in Eastern Europe in the autumn of 1989, and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1991, are but two illustrations. If China is to continue on the road to modernization, a change in its totalitarian structure cannot be avoided.

Dawn of a New Era

The third plenum of the 14th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party held in mid-November, 1993 called for the stepping up of the economic revolution. China decided to launch radical reforms in the areas of taxation, banking, foreign trade, and in its state enterprises. As Deng Xiaoping himself said, economic reforms are irreversible. China must open its market and a market economy must replace a planned economy. Chinese leaders have also decided to tackle the acute problem of corruption. These are hopeful signs.

Though they have adopted a more liberal line in dealing with the fast growing economy in China, Chinese leaders still take a hard line on political reforms. The reason is obvious. They dare not go against the wishes of the paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, flanked by Chen Yun, Bao Yipor, Pang Zhen, Sung Renqiong, and Yang Shangkun. These so-called first generation leaders have an impeccable record of service to the Communist Party. They participated in the Long March.

They brought forth a Modern China in 1949. This is where they have acquired the authority to rule. But these leaders are very old. The oldest is Peng who is ninety-five, the youngest, Sung is eighty-seven, and Deng is eighty-nine. In a few years they will all be gone.

When the next generation of leaders emerge they will not have the same authority as Deng and company. In order to rule this vast country, they will have to rely on the support of the 1.2 billion people. The people will not give them support unless they address the people's needs. People in China want more freedom and a better quality of life. Economic reform has started in China. Political reform must follow. Whatever their form of government in the post-Deng era, China has no choice but to be more open and liberal.

Hong Kong's Destiny Linked to China

Economic and political reforms in China will benefit Hong Kong. The path of openness and respect for individual rights which Chinese leaders have to follow will eventually change their orientation toward Hong Kong. Right now, Chinese leaders are afraid to do what is appropriate for Hong Kong because they are still under the shadow of the elder statesmen. In a few years' time, when they finally stand on their own two feet and become more self-confident, they might be more reasonable, perhaps they will even have an attitude of live and let live in their relations with Hong Kong.

The change in leadership will hasten the coming of the dawn. The future Chinese leadership must address the problems of China, and of Hong Kong, relevantly and effectively. The 1.2 billion people on the mainland and the 5.8 million people in Hong Kong have a key role to play. If they are given more opportunities to contribute, they may not only shape the destiny of China and Hong Kong, but of the entire world.

IV

THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG

The Silent Majority

The Chinese Outlook

Throughout history over 90% of the people of Hong Kong have been Chinese. In the early years, many Chinese with a strong work ethic came to seek jobs. Their main aim was to earn money that would improve their standard of living and provide security for their family. For the majority, who were laborers, only money could “buy” better educational opportunities for their children. Their hope was that when their children were grown they would live comfortably as professionals or white collar workers. Today, the hope is the same.

There are always wide discrepancies in pay. Now the median wage for a blue collar worker is HK\$8,000 per month. A fresh college graduate earns double that amount; a lawyer, a doctor or an accountant at least ten times that amount! Parents are willing to pay for the best education available. It is not uncommon for a family whose total income is HK\$280,000 per year, using half of that amount to support a child’s education in the USA! Chinese are family oriented, so much so that it seems that all they care about is their family. Few care about what is going on in the wider society. There is a Chinese saying that “every family takes care of the snow in front of their home, but does not care about the heavy snow covering the top of their neighbor’s house.”

Throughout China’s long history, the vast majority of the people have been rural and tied to the land. If they needed food, they grew it; if they needed water, they dug a well. The centers of power were of no concern. This attitude gave birth to an indifference toward public, social and political affairs. Moreover, the Confucian teaching on the respect

of authority (often reduced to the respect of persons in authority) has helped people to accept government dictates without question. Many Chinese even revere and/or fear those in authority. A Chinese saying sums this up with the words, "Avoid going into a government office in your lifetime. Avoid entering the gates of hell when you die."

In a Colonial Setting

This Chinese mentality has been reinforced in Hong Kong. One of the basic functions of a colonial government was to maintain smooth sailing and discourage opposition to government action. Young people were taught to be obedient, memorize and repeat, and do not ask questions. This is one of the major characteristics of the educational system in Hong Kong.

In a way this suits the majority of Chinese who came to make money and stay away from hassles with government. They were hoping to leave everything except personal financial affairs to the government. Hong Kong people were often called a one-dimensional people and Hong Kong was labeled a cultural desert. In summary, the people are both utilitarian and individualistic. Many have now lost contact with their cultural roots. They have become extremely self-centered and consumer oriented. Designer clothing is in. There are more Rolls Royces and Mercedes per capita in Hong Kong than anywhere in the world. Hong Kong people consume the largest quantity of brandy and whisky per person in the world. Finally, they spend quite a bit of money on hobbies of which horse racing is number one. Last year, the total turnover of the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club was HK\$60 billion, or HK\$10,000 per person.

Loyalty to the Motherland

When Chinese leaders accused Hong Kong people of being unpatriotic for conducting subversive activities after June 4, 1989, they were absolutely incorrect. Hong Kong has a history of supporting China. Hong Kong Chinese are patriotic. During the nineteenth and the early

part of the twentieth century, Hong Kong people donated generously to aid disaster victims in China. Within weeks of the onset of severe flooding in East China in 1990, Hong Kong people gave more than a HK\$1 billion to relief efforts. A small campaign organized by the Social Communications Department of the Roman Catholic Church and Hong Kong Christian Institute collected more than HK\$10 million in two weeks. Additionally, OXFAM, World Vision and the Hong Kong Christian Council conduct annual fund-raising campaigns to support projects in China.

What happened in 1989 was actually another demonstration of Hong Kong Chinese patriotism. Patriotism for Hong Kong people means helping with China's development and providing a better livelihood for their 1.2 billion compatriots. They believe that this can only come about when China becomes a more open society. When the Chinese leaders decided to crack down on the students' demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, Hong Kong people saw it as a step backward. That is why a million of them took to the streets on two consecutive Sundays to show their indignation. They also donated millions of dollars to aid the student protestors.

Certainly there is a difference in opinion on the meaning of patriotism. Chinese leaders believe that patriotism means unquestioning support. On the other hand, Hong Kong Chinese, believe that patriotism means the unswerving love of their motherland and the people living in it. If China's leaders do something harmful to the land and its people, Hong Kong people will not hesitate to criticize them.

Fear of Communist Rule

There is a vast gap between China and Hong Kong, not only in attitudes about patriotism, but in the scope of freedoms enjoyed by people. Forty-five percent of the population came from China and they know what it means to live under that totalitarian regime. The older generation went through earlier political movements in the 1950s, such as the Great Leap Forward; and middle-aged folks went through the

notorious Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. All these movements were extremely dehumanizing, to say the least, and caused millions of people to lose their dignity and self-esteem, if not also their lives.

Deng's open door policy, which began in 1979, somewhat restored the confidence of the people of Hong Kong and China in the Chinese leadership. But then came the tragic events in 1989. This crushed all their hopes and caused an unprecedented crisis of confidence among Chinese in Hong Kong. Every opinion poll indicated that the majority had no confidence in the Chinese leaders who will become the sovereign rulers of Hong Kong come 1997.

No Confidence in Chinese Leaders

Few people in Hong Kong believe that a "Tiananmen" could happen in Hong Kong after 1997. But the fact remains that people were reminded of what the Communist leaders might do, if their power is threatened. Even those who have not lived in China (about half of the population was born in Hong Kong) have heard about and experienced the contradictions of Chinese leadership.

Chinese leaders pledged that they would respect and honor the wishes of the people. However, when the people of Hong Kong asked China not to build a nuclear power plant in Daya Bay, forty kilometers from Kowloon; and when the people of Hong Kong wanted to have direct elections in 1988, China decided to turn a deaf ear.

When the Sino-British row broke out in October, 1992, China assured Hong Kong that it would separate economics from politics, meaning that while they were dead set against Patten's proposals on political reform, they would still cooperate on economic development. As it turned out, this was far from the truth.

In China, politics is more important than the law. For example, legally they could not revoke Han Dong Fang's passport and citizenship (Han was a Chinese union leader who participated in the 1989 democratic movement in China), but they did. Han is now stranded in Hong Kong. This case has intensified Hong Kong peoples' concern

about their own freedom of movement after 1997. Recently, China has decided to ban the entry of Yao Yung Chin and Richard Tsoi (Hong Kong student leaders).

China has started to use fear tactics in Hong Kong. When several civil servants spoke in the defense of Patten's proposals, they were warned not to be too zealous in their work, if they want to remain in the civil service after 1997. But Deng Xiaoping said in front of two hundred Hong Kong community leaders on October 2, 1984, that those who reprimanded the Communist Party would not encounter any reprisals after 1997. According to Deng, the Party is securely established and no one can overthrow it with a few criticisms.

The Right to Remain Silent

Chinese on the whole have never lived in a context where they felt free to express themselves, especially if their views were addressed to their elders or authorities. Even more so, if their views were contrary to those in authority. In Hong Kong's colonial setting, this was reinforced. This situation might have improved in recent years, if China had given its blessing. The China factor is a big deterrent to change. In the past forty-five years of Communist rule, those who suffered the most were those who spoke up. In the 1950s, Mao urged people to speak up in the movement called the "blossoming of a thousand flowers." But those who did speak up were severely punished.

A serious gap in Chinese tradition is the absence of a "loyal opposition." Chinese rulers only like to hear words pleasing to their ears. If you speak against them, you become the opposition, hence their enemies. Invariably, Chinese rulers get rid of their enemies. As 1997 approaches, and as Chinese leaders step up efforts to curb opposition, fewer people dare to express their views openly.

Hong Kong people are only too familiar with this. In order to avoid reprisals after 1997, they have chosen to remain silent. However, every opinion poll indicates that more than half of the people support Patten's efforts to build a more accountable legislature.

Feelings of Helplessness

People know what is best for Hong Kong, now and beyond 1997. People want their freedoms maintained and the rule of law preserved. They are especially worried that come 1997, their freedoms will be restricted. They are also afraid that the corruption and the arbitrary rule now widely practiced in China will spill over into Hong Kong.

The majority of the people are trapped in the territory. They are not qualified to emigrate. A sense of helplessness or apathy has taken over. People have become even more withdrawn. The best way to describe their state of mind is self-concerned. The spirit of caring for others is just not there anymore.

People need to be re-empowered. A more accessible and accountable government would be a step in the right direction. Direct elections at every level (Legco, Municipal Councils and District Boards) are important. Only through substantial, and hence more meaningful, participation in the whole political process, can people learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Government and non-government organizations must make the promotion of citizenship education their top priority.

The Business Community

Maintaining the Status Quo

When selling Hong Kong, the government consistently maintains that Hong Kong is a unique international city. Hong Kong's uniqueness is based on the fact that there are few places in the world where you can double your return in less than five years, without too much risk.

Hong Kong is an international business center. As such, the business community plays an important role in Hong Kong's success. In return, they enjoy a great many privileges. They have a great deal of influence over government decisions. A handful of Chinese families

and multi-national corporations monopolize Hong Kong's property market, the transport system, utilities, and even the retail business.

Though their sense of belonging to Hong Kong was blurred by the ownership of property overseas, a foreign passport, and the sending of their children to foreign schools, the business community before 1984 took a pro-British (therefore pro-colonial) stance. During the Sino-British negotiations on Hong Kong, they made frequent trips to London to campaign against returning Hong Kong to China. When their plea for some form of British presence failed, an Executive Councillor, who later became a chief advisor to China, resigned in protest at the British "sell-out."

The business community fought hard against the intended British withdrawal from Hong Kong. Even when Geoffrey Howe, the British Foreign Minister, came to Hong Kong in April, 1984 and said that it was unrealistic to expect that the British would have a role to play after 1997, the business community was furious. Representing their strong sentiments, Lydia Dunn (the senior member of Legco at the time, and now the senior member of Exco) advocated that only the land and not the people living on it, should be returned to China. Together with Sir S.Y. Chung (the senior member of Exco at the time), she went to China to present her case. They were snubbed by Deng Xiaoping who considered them, and the community they represented, unpatriotic.

Rational Thinking

Many businessmen risked their futures to come and find their fortune. That explains why corruption was such a serious problem from the 1950s to the 1970s. But today, these risk takers have it made. Now they disdain the kind of gambling in which they once indulged. They much prefer the rule of law and fair competition backed by a "democratic" government. Therefore, rationally speaking, the business community is not against democracy. After all, many were educated in democratic countries and were convinced of the benefits of democracy.

An opinion poll of the membership of the General Chamber of

Commerce was conducted in 1987. A majority of the members were in favor of greater democracy in Hong Kong and many of them were also in favor of introducing direct elections in the Legislature in 1988. In the 1988 Legco election, Jimmy McGregor defeated Veronica Wu in the General Chamber of Commerce functional constituency. He again defeated Paul Cheng in the 1991 election. McGregor is an outspoken democrat, while Wu and Cheng were not supporters of the democratic movement. Both Wu and Cheng had the backing of big business.

At the height of a dispute between China and Hong Kong regarding Legco election arrangements in 1989, the business community took great pains to ask China to allow Hong Kong to have forty percent of the Legco seats be returned by direct election, forty percent by functional constituencies, and twenty percent by the election committee (a form of appointment). Though the request fell far short of what the democrats asked for (fifty percent of Legco seats be returned by direct election in 1991 and one hundred percent in 1995), and what Executive and Legislative Councilors asked for (50% in 1995 and 100% in 2007), nevertheless, it was more than what was dictated in the Basic Law (only a third of directly elected seats in Legco in 1997).

The China Factor

But after 1989, as China attempted to regain the ground lost due to the crackdown on the democratic movement, the business community turned around. First, because they cannot afford to offend China, the future master of the territory and second, because most of them have business interests in China and to confront China means their relations (guanxi) will be ruined.

For example, the Business and Professional Federation (BPF), the most powerful business group, had many pro-British members (one of its leaders was the former Chief Secretary David Akers-Jones). Ordinarily, the government counted on its support. But after Patten put forth his proposals on political reform, the BPF held a press conference and denounced Patten. There was little substance in their statement.

They were just practicing what they had learned from China's treatment of Jardines. A managing director had earlier expressed full support of Patten. In retaliation, China refused to let work proceed on container port number nine, a Jardines-led project.

Allen Lee, head of the Liberal Party and a senior Legco member, reportedly told many of his friends that he changed his allegiance from Britain to China because he has to be "realistic." He thinks that unless he wants to end his political career on June 30, 1997, he has to go along with China. Like Lee, many of the appointed members of Legco (appointed by former governors) have spoken against Patten. Most of the key members of the pro-business Liberal Party were groomed by the government. But now it cannot count on their support, especially on controversial issues.

In return, many business leaders were rewarded handsomely. China has appointed many of them to be advisors on Hong Kong affairs. A few were named to the powerful working panel for the setting up of the Preparatory Committee on the HKSAR. Both of these groups are thought to be a part of China's genuine power base in Hong Kong. It is widely speculated that a few of these business leaders will form the core leadership of the HKSAR government come 1997. There is little the present government can do without the support of the business community, who have shifted their loyalty to Beijing; and without the support of the masses, who are very afraid to speak up openly. A senior civil servant said recently that the Hong Kong government has become a lame duck.

A segment of the pro-China business community is more rational and has a vision of its own. Three years ago, it spent millions of dollars to engage the SRI International Project Team in an extensive study. Its three hundred page report entitled, "Building Prosperity: A Five-Part Economic Strategy for Hong Kong's Future" consisted of many sensible proposals. Two years ago, it undertook a feasibility study on whether Hong Kong could host EXPO '97. These were laudable efforts. Unfortunately, the Hong Kong government did not take their proposals

seriously.

However, many individuals from the pro-China business community are extremely self-seeking. They are only concerned about building “guanxi” with top Chinese leaders. Some of the things they have said are alarming. One suggested China should dispatch the People’s Liberation Army to take over Hong Kong when Patten presented his reforms. One called for the organization of a demonstration against Chris Patten. Fortunately, these suggestions did not materialize because they were neither beneficial to Hong Kong nor to China!

One recent story regarding self-seeking relates to two prominent figures, Dorothy Liu and Lo Tak Shing, both successful lawyers and business people. Liu, legal counsel to the Hong Kong Branch of the New China News Agency (the de facto Chinese consulate) since the early 1970s, was rewarded for her loyalty by being given membership in China’s People’s Congress, and she enjoys good “guanxi” with several top Chinese leaders.

Lo came from a prominent family in Hong Kong. For decades, the family held a seat in both Exco and Legco. Lo resigned after Britain decided to give Hong Kong back to China. Then, Lo turned to China. Within months, he was able to build an amiable relationship with the very top, Deng Xiaoping included. Reportedly, Lo went to China often and played majong with several top Chinese leaders. This drew fire from Liu. This bickering had the Hong Kong and Macau Office of the State Council deeply worried. Many efforts were spent mending the relationship between Liu and Lo. This case is trivial, yet it shows the real danger that as 1997 approaches, Hong Kong people will fight amongst themselves to curry favor with their future masters.

The Brain Drain

Many people continue to play games, hiding their true feelings and putting their own future at risk. But many more have decided to depart. Between April, 1984 (when Geoffrey Howe came to Hong Kong and told the Hong Kong people that Britain would leave in 1997)

and June 4, 1989 (Tiananmen) 150,000 people left Hong Kong. The June 4 event shocked everyone. Many more sought opportunities to leave. When Singapore declared that it would take 25,000 Hong Kong citizens, 350,000 applications were snapped up!

In 1989, 1990 and 1991 about 60,000 people emigrated per year. Canada took in 24,000 a year, Australia 15,000 and the USA approximately 10,000. These were people with training, experience and money. In 1992, 66,000 people emigrated. As a business center, Hong Kong relies heavily on the high standard of service rendered by talented accountants, lawyers, managers and support staff. In the long run emigration will hurt Hong Kong. The government considered the brain drain problem serious enough that the Education and Manpower Branch did a study in 1990 which showed that by 1996, 425,000 people will have left and 93,000 professional and managerial jobs will be vacant. Many believe that the government's results were far too conservative. A recent survey indicated that as many as one out of eight citizens will have made their homes elsewhere by 1997.

Business Trends in Hong Kong

According to one survey, half of the people of Hong Kong want to emigrate. It is estimated that only twelve-fifteen percent actually qualify. By and large, foreign countries will only take immigrants with education, professional skills or money. In the 1980s, Australia took in a great many nurses and secretaries from Hong Kong. Several Canadian provinces required each immigrant family from Hong Kong to bring at least HK\$2 million to invest in their province.

Those who are poor and want to immigrate, work even harder than before to save the needed money. Many of the younger ones have actually quit their jobs and started their own small business (such as property agencies, fashion shops, fast-food restaurants, tutorial schools, etc). They expect to make their first million in two or three years.

Another business trend is the upsurge in conglomerates. Oftentimes supported by money from China and overseas Chinese, these

conglomerates have systematically acquired the control of key businesses, from the print and electronic media to telecommunications. As there are no anti-trust laws, small businesses are intimidated and crushed by these conglomerates. Several chain restaurants, supermarkets and department stores have forced many small businesses to close in recent years.

The third trend is that businesses are setting up their offices or factories in China. In mid-1993, one toy company fired 1000 Hong Kong employees and moved two entire factories to China. In the USA or the UK this might have caused an uproar, but here it was a minor blip on a large trend and as such the closure did not even make the news. Even the Hong Kong based Cathay Pacific has moved its computer services office to Guangzhou and has plans to move more of its operations North of the border. The advantage of cheaper land and labor far outweighs possible disadvantages. Those who are familiar with doing business in China can tell you that the cumbersome bureaucracy in China is nearly hopeless. Most government officials are inefficient and corruption abounds. In light of this, starting a business requires payoffs to at least six officials in five bureaus.

The Democratic Movement

Why Democracy Now?

Many Chinese leaders and conservative business people believe that the Hong Kong system has worked well for one hundred and fifty years and there is no need to change. It is a system without much democratic flavor. More enlightened business people believe the colonial system which favors the rich needs to be reformed. But as they see it, democracy or government by the people is not the best method for reform. A few argue that democracy is good, although the pace must be slow. They argue that the "Westminster form" of democracy is not good for Hong Kong and that years are needed to

develop Hong Kong's own form of democratic government. Therefore, why not wait until the next century?

However their arguments prove that they have a misconception about democracy. They think democracy is rule by the mob. They illustrated this concept with a film, produced in the mid-1980s, showing scenes of fighting between students and policemen on the streets of South Korea and scenes of fighting between the Progressive Party members and the Nationalist Party members in the Legislative Yuan (Council) Chambers in Taiwan. Those scenes were shocking. But these people were not fighting because of democracy, they were fighting FOR democracy. Korean students fought constantly for thirty years, and Korea now has a democratically elected government. The Progressive Party fought for twenty years to be heard in the Legislative Yuan, and finally Taiwan's Nationalist Party has relinquished its one-party rule.

The democratic movement in Hong Kong has not disturbed the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. On the contrary, the democratic movement has forced the government to become more open and accountable. The movement has also enabled thousands of young people to realize that Hong Kong belongs to them and that they must participate in the political process which will shape the future.

As for the future form of government, democratic leaders have not yet arrived at a consensus. So far, they have insisted on an elected legislature and some government accountability to that legislature. These goals are stated unequivocally in both the 1984 Sino-British Agreement and the Basic Law promulgated (passed and announced) by China in 1990.

Hong Kong people have come of age. They deserve a bigger say in their own government. Only a truly representative government can strengthen the bonds of the people, to one another and to the territory. A more democratic government can expedite their participation in and their contributions to, the future of Hong Kong.

Pressure Groups and Political Groups

The people were discouraged from involvement in their own government until the riots in 1967, and then were not encouraged to be involved until Chris Patten arrived in 1992. Before 1967, there were individuals, mostly non-resident, non-Chinese, who were concerned about social justice issues. In those days, the Hong Kong police were above the law. Elsie Tu (then Elsie Elliot) was the first fighter for the underdogs: the hawkers and the newest immigrants from China. Many of these people were victimized by the police.

In the 1970s, the “Hong Kong Observers,” a group of young and foreign trained professionals wrote consistently to the leading newspapers and aired their views on social reform. The Education Action Group (EAG) was formed around the same time. The EAG was mainly responsible for raising issues which were completely overlooked or ignored by the authorities in charge of education. The government certainly did not appreciate the efforts made by these people. Reportedly, the special branch of the Hong Kong police kept a confidential file on each of these concerned citizens. These people were the forerunners of the democratic movement. Without their courage and wisdom as social critics, Hong Kong would be a less attractive place.

People's Movements

There were several people's movements which were active in the 1960s and 1970s. The first was the students' movement. Throughout the world, 1968 was an important year for student movements. In France, students forced Charles de Gaulle to step down. In the United States, anti-war students forced Lyndon Johnson to give up his quest for a second term. In China, students were drawn into the cultural revolution.

In Hong Kong, students forced the community to think about the problems which caused the 1967 riots. The lack of identification with the colony as well as social injustice were identified as the major

problems. Students urged the government to make Chinese the official language as a step towards a solution. (Today, both English and Chinese are official languages.) That marked the beginning of the student movement. In later years, students took up issues such as corruption, and the fight against Japanese claims on Taioyuki, a group of islands in the South China Sea. In the 1980s, the quest for democracy became the main thrust of the student movement.

The second people's movement was the labor movement. On the whole labor was weak, mainly because the government wanted it that way. Labor unions encountered many stringent restrictions, such as confining labor unions to providing members with clinics, cooperatives, and welfare services. Labor unions are still denied the right of corporate bargaining. Only seventeen percent of the work force has joined a trade union. Since the 1930s, both the Nationalists and the Communists tried to support trade unions in Hong Kong. Generally speaking, there are now three groups of trade unions: The Federation of Trade Unions (pro-Beijing), the Hong Kong and Kowloon Trade Union Councils (pro-Taiwan), and The Confederation of Trade Unions (independent).

The first body established to fight for the rights of the workers was the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee (CIC), which was set up by the Hong Kong Christian Council in 1967. Though supported by far-sighted church leaders like Bishop Gilbert Baber of the Anglican Church and the Reverend Dr. Peter Wong of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China, CIC was considered controversial by the majority of Christians. CIC was branded as a Communist initiated body in the 1970s. Now it is accepted by most of the people in Hong Kong, but is labelled as anti-China by Beijing!

The CIC was established for the workers. It organized courses and training opportunities, especially on workers' rights and it lobbied hard for better labor legislation. Therefore, it had direct conflicts with conservatives and the government. Now CIC has joined the democratic movement. It believes that only when the workers get a ballot, can they improve their condition.

The third people's movement was the women's movement. The first women's organization came into being about the turn of the century. It wanted to persuade Chinese women to abandon the wrapping of their and their daughters' feet. This tradition, mostly in the urban areas where Chinese women stayed at home and did not have to work, required female feet to be tightly wrapped and not be allowed to grow longer than three inches. In the 1920s there was the movement to abolish the buying and selling of girl slaves. In the 1950s there was a campaign to persuade the government to outlaw polygamy which succeeded in 1971.

Much was accomplished in 1981. Abortion laws were liberalized, giving women the genuine right to choose. The government granted equal pay and benefits to senior female civil service officers. Paid maternity leave for all workers was passed into law. At the end of the 1980s, many new women's organizations came into being. These were different because they were organized by and for the women at a more grassroots level. Like the workers and the students, they are increasingly concerned with political issues. Their push for equal political rights has become an important voice in the democratic movement of the 1990s.

The Coalition Model

The campaign against the bus fare hike of November, 1980, initiated by the Hong Kong Christian Council and joined by scores of organizations and activist groups, marked the beginning of a new phase for the democratic movement in Hong Kong. Since that time, rather than acting alone, coalitions are formed to work closely on issues. Then the coalitions organize mass rallies and demonstrations, launch signature campaigns, go to see officials and put full-page advertisements in newspapers.

As for fighting for democracy, a coalition for the promotion of democracy was launched at a mass rally at the Ko Shan Theater in 1986. The Ko Shan spirit is kept to this day by groups and individuals who are concerned about democratic development in Hong Kong. Later,

190 representatives of the groups who participated in the Ko Shan Rally presented the “190 model” on political reform.

The crackdown on the democratic movement in China in 1989 diverted the attention of the democratic movement in Hong Kong. Leaders and followers alike felt that they needed to focus their attention on China for a while. They argued quite justifiably, that if there is no democracy in China, neither would there be any in Hong Kong. So, “The Alliance in the Support of Patriotic and Democratic Movement in China” was formed. Leaders of the democratic movement in Hong Kong became the leaders of the Alliance. The Alliance has done little to help the democratic movement in China except perhaps to give direct assistance to Chinese student leaders. But, it has stimulated the aspirations for democracy among the people of Hong Kong.

The Formation of Political Parties

Political groups were formed soon after the future of Hong Kong was sealed in the mid-1980s. The first of the groups was Meeting Point (founded in 1983). The core members of Meeting Point came from the middle class: academics, professionals and businessmen. They have a track record of anti-colonialism and pro-democracy, but they insist that a reasonable working relationship with China must be maintained. Another group is the Association for the Promotion of Democracy and People’s Livelihood (ADPL). Founded in 1982, leaders of this group have a long history of working in public housing estates and with the grassroots. The most middle-class oriented group, the Hong Kong Affairs Society, was founded in 1984. Many of its core members are highly trained professionals and business executives.

The first ever direct elections for seats in Legco, held in September 1991, prompted these political groups to rethink their role. Each must decide whether to try to get a few seats in Legco or to remain working from outside (the Legco building). Meeting Point and ADPL finally decided to contest the elections. While they were trying to decide, leading democrats such as Martin Lee and Szeto Wah, who were not

associated with any political groups, decided to form a political party, the United Democrats Hong Kong (UDHK) in April, 1990. The UDHK absorbed all the leaders of the Hong Kong Affairs Society and some from Meeting Point and the ADPL.

The 1991 Elections

The district board elections held in March, the municipal elections held in May, and finally, the Legco elections held in September, 1991, put the democrats to the test. It turned out that in each election, the democrats won a landslide victory. Their long history of working with the grassroots was a major factor, but the anti-Communist feelings of the people, especially after the events of June 4, 1989, was even more of a factor. The democrats support of the student movement in China and their subsequent denunciations of the Chinese leadership was widely exploited during the hard-fought campaign.

Eighteen Legco members were directly elected. The results: UDHK(12), ADPL(1), Meeting Point(2), Rural district advisors(2), and the remaining seat was won by Emily Lau, a former Far East Economic correspondent and a former chairperson of the Journalists Association. Ms. Lau is one of the most well known of the democrats and is probably the most outspoken. Her sharp criticism of the Chinese, the British, and the Hong Kong governments, as well as of the business community has caused them endless embarrassment. All pro-business and pro-China candidates lost in the elections.

The Future of the Democratic Movement

The leaders of UDHK, Meeting Point and ADPL are now extremely busy with their Legco work. They are no longer able to lead the democratic movement. Furthermore, for Meeting Point and ADPL, a stand for democracy is not only unrealistic, but is a stumbling block to their political future. For China, the quest for democracy is an anti-China strategy. Political parties which want to continue after 1997 certainly cannot ignore the feelings of Chinese leaders.

Who then will fill the leadership vacuum in the democratic movement? Are student leaders, union leaders and Christian leaders up to the task? Christian leaders did provide the key leadership in the "Hong Kong People Saving Hong Kong Campaign" in 1989. But they are far too busy with the ambitious expansion projects of their own church organizations. Student leaders are thought to be too inexperienced.

The Sino-British deadlock over constitutional reform seems to have given new life to the democratic movement. Patten is rumored to be considering conceding to China on many of his proposals. The democrats are furious about another sell-out by the British-Hong Kong government. Therefore, a new campaign that insists on a democratic government has been launched. The goal is to have full democracy in Legco in 1995, i.e. all sixty seats in Legco would be filled by direct elections. Emily Lau, Christine Loh (an appointed Legco member), and the UDHK have joined together and this has given a new impetus to the democratic movement. If this fails, where will the movement turn next?

In its early stages, the democratic movement advocated for the return of Hong Kong to China, but at the same time wanted a gradual movement toward democracy in Hong Kong. China agreed. But China changed its mind after June 4, 1989. When Chris Patten came to Hong Kong, democrats supported him. But, on the brink of another sell-out, they have turned against Patten. The democrats must learn to rely on principles and on the people of Hong Kong, themselves included. Now is the time for the democrats to forge a practical vision for Hong Kong. They cannot remain passive, responding to issues which fall in their laps. The Hong Kong government is often accused of not having any long term or comprehensive policies, this is because it does not have a vision for the future. The democrats must have a vision.

Most of the leading democrats have gotten themselves into Legco and have become part of the political structure. Efforts must be stepped up to train the next generation of leaders. In theory, the democratic

movement is best led by people who are not too involved with the establishment.

Finally, the future of the democratic movement is in the hands of Hong Kong's people. People must be stimulated to think and be concerned about their future. They must realize that if they stand together, there is nothing they cannot do. After all, democracy is about people-their being, their role, and their rights and responsibilities. Hence, the democratic movement is a people's movement. Democrats must spare no effort in promoting full-scale democratic education and understanding. Right now, the government is not doing it, the churches are not doing much, and educational institutions are too busy with their daily chores. Therefore, this important task must be done by everyone concerned, including social activists, Christians, students, women, and workers.

THE CHURCH IN HONG KONG

Past Contributions

Education

More than ninety percent of the population of Hong Kong is non-Christian. They know little about Christianity. But when asked where they want to send their children to school, invariably the answer is “Jiaohui Xuexiao” (a school run by the church). Actually, few parents fight to get their children into “church schools” for religious purposes. For those who belong to the middle class, they believe that church schools can help their children obtain better grades in all open examinations, and hence there is a higher probability of entering higher learning institutions, and then, a better chance of getting a well-paid job or becoming a professional, (e.g. a lawyer, a medical doctor, or an accountant). For those who come from the lower class, many believe that church schools can teach their children good manners and behavior. Church schools are known for the strict discipline they maintain. Many church schools are also famous for their high scholastic standards.

When missionary societies came to Hong Kong, one of the first things they did was to set up schools. Just after World War II, of the top twenty secondary schools, with the exception of three government schools, all were run by Christian communities which included the Society of St. Francis of Seles, the Jesuit Society, the De La Salle Brothers, the Maryknoll Sisters, the London Missionary Society (British Reformed and Congregational), and the Church Missionary Society (British Anglican). For more than one hundred years, these schools with high standards and strong discipline (some would call them elitist schools) have produced highly successful professionals, business people

and senior civil servants. The church's contributions to the territories high school education are greatly appreciated.

Many of these "famous" schools also operate their own primary schools as well as kindergartens. Some believe that this early childhood education, starting for children as young as three years old, is a key factor in producing thousands of well-behaved and highly successful students.

In post-secondary education, the church did not contribute as much due to the lack of the resources required by higher learning institutions. Nevertheless, with limited resources, in 1952, the major denominations helped establish Chung Chi College, one of the founding colleges of the Chinese University of Hong Kong ("Chung Chi" means the honoring of Christ). In 1959, the American Baptist Convention founded Baptist College which is to become the fourth university in Hong Kong next year. A group of dedicated Christian educators and businessmen founded Lingnan College in 1973. Lingnan may soon become the eighth degree granting tertiary educational institution in Hong Kong.

While there have been recent criticisms about the way churches run their schools, it is worth noting that because of the big part the churches play in building and managing schools, it became possible for Hong Kong to have nine years of compulsory free education starting in 1978. In two or three years this will be increased to eleven years.

Relief

Like Hong Kong itself, the church followed a fairly slow pace of development in the first one hundred years (1841-1941). But after the Second World War as Hong Kong undertook the difficult task of reconstruction (Hong Kong sustained massive destruction before, during and after the Japanese occupation between Christmas, 1941 and the summer of 1945), there was a huge influx of refugees from the mainland due to the civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists. This influx of refugees (at least a million in the ten year period, 1946-1956) provided a cheap and hard-working labor force. But since most of the

refugees came with empty hands, care and shelter were desperately needed. The church in Hong Kong, with the aid of overseas churches, stepped in to help. Much of the relief work in the early 1950s was provided by the churches.

The overseas missionary societies of Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand never considered Hong Kong to be an important missionary area because Hong Kong was too small. Since the 1840s, their eyes were always on China. Hong Kong was an important stepping stone to China. Many missionary societies used Hong Kong as a rest and recreation base and there are still traces of missionary homes on Lantau and Cheung Chau Islands. Before World War II, except for the British Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society, few missionary societies contributed much to Hong Kong.

But after the Communists took over, the missionaries were forced to leave China. Because of the dire needs in Hong Kong in the 1950s, some came to Hong Kong. Resources were poured into Hong Kong from their societies back home. Lutheran World Service and Church World Service started to work in Hong Kong in 1952 and 1953 respectively. The Presbyterians not only started relief and welfare work by setting up Christian Family Service Center in 1954, but also established the College Student Work Project which enabled hundreds of poor youngsters to finish their higher education. The Methodists from the United States built three villages (Asbury, Epworth and Wesley) to provide refugees with affordable housing. The Hong Kong Christian Council, organized in 1954, aimed to coordinate all of these church relief efforts.

Medical and Health Services

One of the first attempts to bring western medicine to Hong Kong was made by the London Missionary Society. In 1887 it set up a small hospital (later known as Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital). This hospital was essential for the founding of the medical school of Hong

Kong University in 1911. Nethersole Hospital's nursing school is one of the best in the territory. Many mothers like to go to Nethersole to give birth.

Many clinics were set up in the 1950s and 1960s by Christian organizations to serve the poor in the squatter hut areas and the resettlement estates. In 1973, protestant churches in Hong Kong joined together to build the United Christian Hospital in Kwun Tong, an industrial town in East Kowloon. The hospital pioneered community health in Kwun Tong. Its efforts were recognized by the World Health Organization.

A handful of Roman Catholic hospitals and two Adventist hospitals provide good service to middle and upper class patients.

Social Welfare

The 1967 riots brought many social and human problems to the surface. Parents endured long working hours to make ends meet. As a result their children were neglected. Youth and family services were introduced by many church-run social welfare agencies, especially in the 1970s. Youth tea houses, children and youth centers, outreach work, school social work, foster care, family counselling, and hostels for the elderly were begun. Later, services for the handicapped were introduced by the same church agencies, led by Hong Kong Christian Service (a merger of Church World Service and Lutheran World Service) and Caritas. These services included a halfway house for ex-drug addicts, help for mental patients, handicapped infant care and parents' effectiveness training programs.

Church social welfare agencies not only provide a quantity of services to the wider community in Hong Kong, but also pioneer new services, new methods and new models of service to help meet new needs and demands. This is one very important contribution which the churches have made to Hong Kong in the past three decades.

Social Advocacy

From time to time, the church realized that social services could help alleviate the suffering of people, but it seldom could get rid of the problems which caused the pain. So over the years the church and its members tried to tackle some of the root problems which exist in Hong Kong society. Women Christian leaders played an active leadership role in the Women's movement (mainly fighting for equal rights). The Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC) founded by the major Protestant denominations, gave full support to college students. In order to try to address the increasingly serious labor problems and the plight of workers, HKCC started the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee (CIC) in 1967. Though controversial and not well supported by local churches, CIC did a tremendous job of lobbying for better labor legislation in Hong Kong in the 1970s and the 1980s.

HKCC also initiated a Public Policy Commission in 1981. This was an important step in acknowledging that the church has a role to play in the process of formulating public policy. Throughout the 1980s, this commission served as an important forum for socially concerned citizens. It helped to raise issues related to 1997 as early as April, 1982. Since then, it has made important contributions to the democratic progress of Hong Kong.

Pastoral Work

While it is true to say that by and large the church in Hong Kong is very conservative and inward looking, it is also true that over the first century and a half it has provided plenty of opportunities for young people who were baptized as Christians, joined a local congregation and became actively involved in its youth fellowship. Though it is not entirely true today, youth fellowships were important training grounds for young people. Although informally, leadership formation took place all the time; many church and community leaders admit that they were greatly benefitted by their active participation in youth fellowships.

Local congregational life, though at times dull, did give some

faithful followers a bit of moral advice and guidance. Many have found spiritual comfort in attending church services. The increase of baptized Christians in Hong Kong came only in the 1950s and 1960s. A great many of these were refugees. In the beginning, they came to the church on a regular basis to receive flour, milk powder, tinned food, and rice. As time went on, many became interested in the church and joined. These Christians were sometimes known as “rice Christians.” The Roman Catholic Church experienced their biggest growth in those days. Most of these rice Christians are now members of the middle class. Some have gone overseas.

Since the 1970s, because of the churches’ efforts to build schools, evangelical churches and organizations started to work in schools which encouraged a great number of high school students to become Christians in the 1980s. The evangelical churches experienced large scale church growth at the same time.

Traditionally, most local congregations concentrated their efforts on taking care of their members. Many congregations even had their own welfare departments. In 1915, many of these congregations formed the Hong Kong Chinese Christian Churches Union (HKCCCU). Since its inception, this Union has been charged with caring for the aged (by operating two homes for the aged), and caring for the dead (by managing two Christian cemeteries).

Ecumenical Work

Several denominations founded the HKCC in 1954. This was the first important attempt to give witness to the unity of the church. The Roman Catholic Church and HKCC founded the Ecumenical Joint Committee on Development in 1973. This committee has organized seminars on important topics and has voiced its concerns on several crucial issues, including the Vietnamese Refugees issue.

Because of its strategic position, the church in Hong Kong has served, since 1981, as a link between the church in China and the church in Asia and the entire ecumenical world. In April, 1981, an official

delegation from the Church in China came to Hong Kong to attend a consultation sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia. Afterwards, the delegation stayed on to visit the Hong Kong churches. In September, 1981, HKCC organized a church delegation from Hong Kong to visit churches in China. This re-opened communication between the church in China and the church in Hong Kong which had been officially broken off in 1956.

A Well Established Church

Building-Centered

The church in Hong Kong is young. It was relatively quiet before the Second World War. It began to develop by leaps and bounds in the 1950s. Its rapid growth was partly because of needs and demands, but, more importantly, because leaders of the church in Hong Kong (lay and clergy included) have an entrepreneurial spirit in their blood. They are born planners and managers and are extremely good at putting up buildings, starting new organizations and planning new projects and programs. Their weakness is in educating their own members. None of the top church leaders in Hong Kong is a theologian.

Ever since the first missionary set foot in Hong Kong (the first pastor was a military chaplain), his immediate concern was to find a piece of land and put up a building. That explains why wherever you go in Hong Kong, you always find churches. The Roman Catholic Church owns some of the choicest pieces of property. The Maryknoll Convent, Maryknoll Convent School, and La Salle College are on Boundary Street and Waterloo Road (the most expensive residential area in Kowloon). In some parts of Hong Kong you can still see traces of missionary compounds. The London Missionary Society occupied the entire block between Bonham Road and Robinson Road, consisting of Hop Yat Church, Nethersole Hospital, Ying Wa Girls' School, and a couple of multi-storied residences. Wah Yan College (Jesuit High

School), Kowloon True Light College (a Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China school), Lutheran College, Lutheran Center, Ward Memorial Methodist Church and the Yang Social Service Center occupy at least twenty percent of the land area in the Yaumatei District!

As land becomes more expensive, many churches in the new towns either use school or social center facilities for weekend gatherings and Sunday worship and rent or buy a small flat for the church office. Well-to-do congregations use residential flats, commercial or even industrial buildings as their base. Recently, an Alliance church spent HK\$70 million to purchase ten thousand square feet of space in a building sitting on top of a Mass Transit Railway Station in a busy district. Reportedly, it serves the middle class community extremely well. It has a sanctuary with seating capacity of one thousand, a fellowship hall, classroom facilities, adequate office space and a bookstore.

There must be several thousand church buildings or church premises in the territory. The presence of Christianity is very evident because of the crosses on these church premises.

Evangelical Organizations

There are about two hundred para-church organizations in Hong Kong. With only a few exceptions, most of them engage in spreading the gospel and/or increasing the number of baptized Christians and building congregations. While part of their financial support comes from their related organizations abroad, the rest comes from local Christians. Here are some examples of their activities.

The Fellowship of Evangelical Students (FES) celebrated its thirty-fifth anniversary in October, 1993. FES sends field workers to all the post-secondary colleges to work with university students. They are supported by a bookstore, library and a small publications department.

“Breakthrough” is an outgrowth of FES. It was established twenty years ago. It uses unconventional methods to reach young people. Its publication “Breakthrough” and “Junior Breakthrough” are on sale in newspaper stands all over Hong Kong. It runs a radio talk show, a

bookstore, a counselling center and a children and youth center. It organizes courses and seminars. Recently, it convinced the government to grant Breakthrough a large piece of land outside Shatin in the New Territories. In three years time, a HK\$150 million youth village will be erected.

The second group aims to preach the gospel to the sick, workers, drug addicts or prostitutes. Hospital chaplaincy has become a very lively movement in Hong Kong. It has completely overshadowed the hospital chaplaincy programs in hospitals run by the Roman Catholic Church or the mainline denominations.

The third group concentrates on preaching the gospel in China. Far East Gospel Broadcasting Corporation produces programs to be broadcast to the mainland through a radio station in the Philippines. Chinese Church Research Center keeps a close watch on happenings in the churches in China. It also runs a seminary. This seminary trains people to preach the gospel in China.

The fourth group does coordinating or support work. The Chinese Coordination Center for World Evangelism is by far the best supported amongst all the evangelical organizations in Hong Kong. It aims to evangelize Chinese around the world. The Church Renewal Movement aims to give local church pastors nurture and support. It has now merged with "Mission 2000." It has a heavy "Lausanne" overtone. The more liberal evangelicals now weekly publish the "Christian Times."

Local Congregations

There are about 1,100 Protestant parishes and local congregations in Hong Kong. A great many of them have a history of less than twenty years. The church growth movement came to Hong Kong in the 1970s. Existing evangelical oriented congregations try to meet the challenge of planting congregations in the new towns or in new high rise buildings. Most of these new congregations are extremely conservative and inward looking and their major goal is to increase their membership. There is little coordination or cooperation amongst these churches. It is not

uncommon to find two local churches exist side by side in one high rise building.

About two hundred congregations do work together via the Hong Kong Christian Chinese Churches' Union. Founded in 1915, the HKCCCU, besides managing two homes for the aged and two Christian cemeteries, also supports mass rallies. It has featured a Louis Palau Crusade and four Billy Graham Crusades over a span of forty years. At times, HKCCCU and its members speak out on moral issues, like gambling and pornography. But on the whole, these congregations tend to accept the view that social concern should not be the business of the church. The extremely narrow business-like agenda of a board or executive committee meeting of any local church can adequately illustrate this point.

Mainline Denominations

While the evangelical Christians are preoccupied with church growth, planting more churches, and increasing membership; the ecumenical Christians are mainly concerned with building more schools and social service centers. A majority of the mainline local churches run at least a kindergarten, if not also a primary school or a youth center. Local church pastors in the mainline churches have become good managers. The price they pay is that they are spending less time in pastoral work. Some local church pastors, especially those who have been in the same situation for many years, dread preaching. "Let the pastor be a pastor" must be the cry from the hearts of many Christians. Membership in the mainline churches has dropped significantly over the past ten years.

The mainline denominations work more closely together than the evangelical churches. Most belong to the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC). Founded in 1954, HKCC has a long tradition of doing the jobs which are necessary, but not convenient for individual churches. The founding of the Hong Kong Industrial Committee (CIC) is an example. HKCC also does the work which no single church can do.

The planning, building and now running of the United Christian Hospital (UCH) is a good example. HKCC also coordinates the Hong Kong religious broadcasts on the radio. Besides CIC and UCH, it also indirectly runs the Hong Kong Christian Service, the Christian Family Service Center and Nethersole Hospital. HKCC maintains a good working relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. They co-sponsored many meetings and events on special Sundays, notably the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Since 1975, HKCC has sponsored the annual fundraising campaign for service projects in Asia and Africa, "Five Loaves and Two Fish." In earlier years, all the funds raised were channelled through the Commission on Inter-church Aid, Refugees and World Service of the World Council of Churches. Throughout the 1980s, HKCC gave significant contributions to social and political debates through its Public Policy Commission.

Changes came in the late 1980s. Denominational leaders suggested that HKCC should be less socially concerned and that it should not engage in debates on controversial issues. It was argued that HKCC remain low-key and only do things which members felt comfortable with and upon which member churches agreed. As one of its former general secretaries commented three years ago, if HKCC only does what the churches do, why is it necessary to have HKCC?

The fact that these denominational leaders have little commitment to the ecumenical movement (unlike their predecessors) not only weakens the witness of HKCC, but the witness of their own churches as well. The World Council of Churches (WCC) has one member in Hong Kong, the Church of Christ in China, Hong Kong Council (CCC). The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) has four members in Hong Kong: CCC, Anglican, Methodist and the HKCC. Despite the fact that the CCA's office is in Hong Kong, the WCC and CCA members in Hong Kong only give lip service to the WCC and the CCA.

The Roman Catholic Church

Christianity was brought to Hong Kong with the arrival of the

British garrison. Military chaplains were amongst the first to set foot in Hong Kong. However, according to records, the Roman Catholic Church established a Mission Prefecture in Hong Kong in April, 1841. It was raised to an apostolic vicariate in November, 1874 and became an independent diocese in 1946.

Since the 1840s dozens of Roman Catholic religious and missionary societies have sent missionaries to work in Hong Kong. They built schools, started parishes, and launched many social as well as religious service projects. Now the Roman Catholic Church runs more than three hundred schools and about one hundred parishes and parish centers. Caritas, by far the biggest social service agency in Hong Kong, is the social service arm of the church.

After the retirement of the Most Reverend Lawrence Bianchi, Bishop of Hong Kong from 1951 to 1969, Bishop Francis Hsu became the first Chinese Bishop. Both Bishop Hsu and his successor Bishop Peter Lee served only briefly and met with untimely deaths. The present Bishop, Cardinal John Baptist Wu, who was born in China and has served in Taiwan, was consecrated in 1975. He was made a Cardinal in 1988. The move was seen as a gesture by the Pope to show China that the Roman Catholic Church has not forgotten China. On the contrary, it considers the church in China important. The present Chinese government does not recognize the Vatican, despite the fact that the Pope has sent signals to China that he wants to open a dialogue with China. The Pope expects Cardinal Wu to be a bridge between China and the Vatican.

Hong Kong is an extremely modern, secular and materialistic city. Its citizens face many ethical dilemmas. The conservative Pope and his church are not adequately addressing their needs. Just as in the Protestant churches, many young intellectuals are leaving the church.

Seminary Education

Including the Roman Catholic Seminary and the Holy Spirit Seminary, there are seventeen seminaries in Hong Kong. Most of them

are denominational seminaries. The Lutheran, Baptist, Alliance, Evangel, Bethel, Assembly of God, the Salvation Army, etc. have their own seminaries. Evangelical Christians support the China Graduate School of Theology. Mainline protestant denominations support the Theological Division of Chung Chi College. The Chung Chi Seminary is the only seminary in a university setting. It has excellent library facilities and faculty support. The sad fact is that the supporting denominations are only giving it lukewarm support. One has stopped sending its students to Chung Chi for training, and the other two have scrapped their previous commitment of only sending their students to Chung Chi.

Why are there seventeen seminaries and Bible schools when there is such a small Christian population (250,000 Roman Catholic and an equal number of Protestants)? The churches in Hong Kong are in no way capable of supporting seventeen theological institutions. As a result, many seminaries and Bible Schools get by with extremely limited resources and facilities. Most depend on pastors who do part-time teaching. Of course it would have been a lot better if there were only three or four seminaries, with each of the four having strong faculties in one or two disciplines (like Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Theology, Ethics, etc.). The church in Hong Kong needs to get rid of its narrow outlook, and start working together, beginning with theological education.

Financial support for theological education is shamefully limited. Of the estimated total offering of no less than HK\$ one billion per year by Christians in Hong Kong, less than two percent goes to the seventeen seminaries and Bible schools. And yet, theological education and the training of pastors and future leaders of the church is the most important function in the life of the church.

In recent years, despite 1997, there is actually a reported increase of students in seminaries and Bible schools. Undoubtedly, many young people want to commit themselves to the full-time ministry. There is definitely a need for more pastors in Hong Kong. Uncertainty brings

more people to the church. Uncertainty about 1997 also drives away many experienced pastors. According to one survey, one out of three pastors is thinking of emigrating to another country. That leaves many churches in Hong Kong without enough full-time pastors. So the need to train more pastors is urgent.

A cynic would say that the increase in students applying for enrollment in seminary is because they want to use ordination to emigrate. There is no immigrant quota for ordained pastors in Canada, the United States, and Australia. It really shows the predicament of the church in Hong Kong. In order to reverse this trend of self-seeking, churches in Hong Kong must take theological education and especially the training of pastors much more seriously. They must direct more resources to supporting the seminaries. A few denominations and many congregations in Hong Kong are very wealthy. They must abandon the “holier than thou” or “only my faith is pure” mentality and start working together in providing education to seminarians. Seminaries must seek closer cooperation with one another.

But first, seminary teachers in Hong Kong must rededicate themselves to the training of pastors who are going to be the leaders of the next century. Future pastors need better training than yesterday or even today. They must be equipped with solid theological foundations and must be given opportunities for the development of a broad ecclesiology. Above all, they must be trained to be committed to the renewal of the church as well as to the well-being of the masses of people.

Emergence of Renewal Forces

A Church with Many Privileges

The Christian Church came to Hong Kong with the colonizers. The close church-state relationship in Britain was brought to Hong Kong immediately when it became a British Crown Colony. The Hong Kong

government, controlled by the British, has always looked after the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church extremely well. These two churches (together with the former London Missionary Society) took advantage of this and acquired a great deal of land from the government at token premiums. In the 1980s and 90s, they became rich by taking advantage of the skyrocketing property market to sell several pieces of land.

While churches sold property to get rich, they continued to ask the government to give them land or buildings in new towns for evangelistic work. In 1981, the two bishops and HKCC's General Secretary went to negotiate with the Chief Secretary and got the following agreement from the government: Religious bodies may be granted land at nil premium, if they also agree part of the building be used to serve the community (e.g. to sponsor a child care center or a center for the handicapped, etc.), and churches can use schools and social centers for religious purposes provided they do not interfere with the latter's activities. The second part of the agreement endorsed by Exco in May, 1981 especially benefitted evangelical churches in their planting of new congregations in new towns.

The spirit of the agreement was a recognition of the church's contributions to the wider community in Hong Kong. But in reality the benefits it brings to the church far outweighs any contribution made by the church. For without it, the rapid expansion of local congregations in the 1980s would not have happened. The Education Department and the Social Welfare Department also give priority to the established churches when they vet applications for new projects and for funding.

Many influential business tycoons and senior civil servants are members of the Anglican Church or the Roman Catholic Church (Patten is a devout Roman Catholic). It was and is not unusual to give favors, though not always intentionally, to their own churches. By tradition the Anglican Bishop and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong rank extremely high on the official protocol list, just after the Chief Secretary, the Chief Justice, and the Commander of the British Armed

Dependency Syndrome

The church in Hong Kong has done a great deal for Hong Kong. In return, it is handsomely rewarded. If all institutions run by the churches were put together, the church would probably now be running the biggest business empire in Hong Kong. Because of its sheer size, it has become influential. It is in control of thousands of jobs, of which most are teachers, social workers, nurses and administrative staff. The church enterprise in Hong Kong probably is worth billions of dollars.

But this huge amount did not come from the Sunday offerings of the faithful. Before the 1960s, missionary societies paid most of the bills. They also sent a large number of missionaries to Hong Kong to help build this empire. As Hong Kong became more affluent in the late 1960s, overseas missionary societies started to make plans for a gradual withdrawal. Local churches used the opportunity to reaffirm the Three-Self Principle: self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-administering. Gradually, local churches became “indigenized.” They no longer depended on overseas churches.

But in reality independence never got off the ground. Instead of overseas churches, local churches turned to the government as well as wealthy tycoons or charitable foundations controlled by government officials or tycoons for support. The church now depends on the government to finance its recurrent expenses in schools and social agencies. In a new project, the government provides the land and 80% of the building, fixture, furniture and equipment costs. The church gets the remaining 20% of the capital costs from the Jockey Club or a donation from rich individuals.

Don't Rock the Boat

Six years ago, Emily Lau, a Far East Economic Review correspondent (now an elected legislator), insisted that church leaders, the government authorities (also including those in Beijing) and business

tycoons have given birth to an “Unholy Alliance.” This alliance is beneficial to all parties concerned. Those who hold the political power and the economic power are pleased to have the sanction and support of the church leaders who supposedly have the moral power.

The components of this alliance must be satisfied with the existing arrangement. All parties seem to benefit from the arrangement. Any change implies that some of their privileges, power and influence may be taken away. That is why they are eager to hold onto the status quo and would use every means to deter the process of democratization which is synonymous with the redistribution of political power. A few years ago, there were reports of the suppression of activist clergymen within the Anglican Church. Church leaders often admonish their members, ordained and laity alike, to stay away from politics. The fact that the Anglican Bishop was a member of the Basic Law Drafting Committee, a member of the standing committee of the Basic Law Consultative Committee, and now has been appointed by Beijing as an advisor on Hong Kong affairs exposes a serious contradiction in their teaching. Apparently, China sympathizers can be involved in politics, but the parishioner with a belief in democracy cannot.

On the whole, the Roman Catholic Church is far more traditional. The core leadership is rather conservative. However, there are also many liberals. The Cardinal, himself not very socially involved, usually gives permission and sometimes even behind the scene support to the liberal priests and sisters, as well as church groups who want to play a part in the political struggle.

1997 Strategies

Most of the churches and denominations have formulated no particular strategies to prepare for the transition. Some fundamental groups consider it wise to expand their worship centers and enroll as many individuals as possible. Others think that if they are facing a more repressive government after 1997 small is beautiful. Many churches have taken the setting up of cell groups or house groups as

their priority in the years to come. This is also what the Roman Catholic Church thinks. In its “March into the Bright Decade” issued in 1989, the development of small faith communities throughout the diocese was the top priority.

Churches in Hong Kong issued several manifestos in the 1980s. The statement signed by the leading evangelicals in March, 1984 is still important (though ironically several of the drafters have emigrated). It was succeeded by the Mission 2000 statement which appealed to Christians to rededicate themselves to continue their witness in Hong Kong. Methodist ministers also issued a statement in June, 1988 to the same effect.

The “manifesto on religious freedom” sponsored by HKCC and signed by more than two hundred churches (including denominations, local congregations, and church agencies) in July, 1984 was the most comprehensive and forward looking statement. It was presented to the Hong Kong and Macau Office of the State Council as well as the Religious Affairs Bureau in Beijing in September, 1984.

In the mission consultation sponsored by HKCC in November, 1980, the church in Hong Kong was urged to adopt as its mission priorities: evangelizing the poor, ministries to students, re-establishing a relationship with the Church in China, participating in public policy formulation and influencing the value system in Hong Kong. In its mid-decade mission consultation held in 1986, the mission priorities were revised to: voicing an opinion on constitutional reform and the drafting of the Basic Law, full-scale promotion of civic education, concern for the livelihood of the masses, renewal of local congregations and strengthening inter-church cooperation. Because of limited resources within HKCC and the lack of will power to act on the part of its member denominations, little followup has been done, especially regarding the recommendations of the mid-decade consultation.

The Prophetic Minority

A portion of Christians and churches, because of their rather

narrow faith outlook, are afraid of or not used to getting involved in the social process. Other church leaders advise their faithful not to get socially involved because they consider it too upsetting to the establishment. So the church, since the late 1980s, has been quite isolated and irrelevant to the whole social process. To counter the church leaders' conservative thinking as well as the majority of Christians who choose to remain silent, since 1980, many concerned Christians have decided to get together and address some of the most urgent issues facing the community. These include social justice and human rights issues, as well as legal and political reform issues.

The first of such groups, the Sentinels, was formed in 1982. Most of its members were academics and professionals and came from an evangelical background. They organized seminars and published their views almost weekly in a local newspaper read mostly by intellectuals. In 1987, a group of recent college graduates founded Christians For Hong Kong Society. While the Sentinels concentrated on influencing the public opinion, the Society remains an action oriented group. There are also the Justice and Peace Commission and the Federation of Catholic College Students from the Roman Catholic Church; and there are the Christian Industrial Committee and the Hong Kong Student Christian Movement from the Protestant church. The Hong Kong Christian Institute (HKCI) has served as an umbrella to those groups.

Founded in September of 1988, HKCI serves to strengthen the network of active Christian groups. It also attempts to expand the thinking of Christians through its publication of a bi-monthly theological journal, newsletters and four series of books as well as through its monthly seminars or courses. Many Christians, Protestants and Catholics, progressive or conservative alike, find HKCI's efforts to bridge the gap between church and society as well as faith and life helpful. Together, these Christian groups and a dozen social concern groups of church organizations or local congregations, have created a formidable alternative voice in society. These groups also stand as a sign of hope for renewal of the established church in Hong Kong.

As Hong Kong moves towards 1997, every effort should be made to create more space and freedom for people to think and to act. If the established or institutional church fails to perform these functions and fails to act as a social conscience, the fact that a score of Christian groups step in and do it on behalf of the church should not only be appreciated by the active liberals or the democratic elements in Hong Kong, but by the Christian community as well.

New Thinking Required

Christians are only eight percent of Hong Kong, but they are responsible for more than 60% of the social welfare work, 40% of the secondary and primary schools and kindergartens and about 20% of the hospital beds. Moreover, only a few hundred Christian leaders actually participate in carrying this extremely heavy institutional burden.

Furthermore, in reality, the churches of Hong Kong are not actually running these institutions. The church depends heavily on government subsidies or subventions, and it has to follow strictly the subsidized code and subvention procedures. This means that the church leaders do not really have a free hand to do according to their ideals, and yet, all their time is being absorbed in managing these institutions. There is little or even no time for the church leaders to read, study and reflect.

It has often been stated that church leaders of this generation are good managers, but poor thinkers. Further, they are so used to conducting business that they have forgotten their main function which is the nurturing of people.

The church in Hong Kong really has to stop and reflect on why so many Christians suffer from a confidence crisis and have decided to leave Hong Kong for good. HKCI's survey three years ago indicated one in four Christians will be gone by 1997 (double the ratio of the general population which is one in eight). Has the church failed in teaching the Christian faith to its members? One of the foundations of the Christian faith is that God is the Lord of all history, who acts in history and who intervenes in human struggles. If God is with us, who

can be against us? Why are Christians in Hong Kong not experiencing this?

Maybe the God which Hong Kong Christians follow is too small. The church, itself very self-seeking, is setting the mood and tone for Christians. The church in Hong Kong constantly expands. In building more centers and schools, the church has acquired, though unintentionally, the attitude of empire builders. The church declares that it aims to provide service to the needy. But along the way, the church is amassing more power and influence. This deviates greatly from the basic Christian teaching of “Kenois” (the emptying of oneself for the sake of others). “For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it, but anyone who loses his life for the sake of Jesus and the gospel, will save it.” (Mark 8:35)

We need a new outlook for the church-the church is not for self-gain, but for the well being of others. “Others” refers to the totality of God’s creation. Christians should not reduce their thinking and actions to a very small world. Living in a complex and pluralistic world, Christians must be brave enough to embrace much more than what has been taught.

A New Community of Faith

From the first covenant between God and Abraham (Gen. 12:1-12) through the priests, the judges, down to the prophets, the tradition of the chosen is to be a blessing for all the nations. This is also the most basic nature of the Christian Church.

In terms of the mission of the church, the Genesis tradition is to let the whole world know that God is the Creator and that human beings are created in God’s image. This means every human being is precious. Individuals are the masters of this world. As master, God also gives one the basic task of taking care of the world and of each other (Genesis 1:26,28; 2:15). To put it plainly, one of the most important tasks of the church in any age is to uphold the dignity of human beings.

The church in Hong Kong supports efforts to generate a democratic

spirit, and hence a democratic culture in Hong Kong, not because it wants to counter China's coming, but because it is the *chaïros* (gifted time). People of the world have come of age and Hong Kong people are ready to rise to the challenge of shaping Hong Kong's future, which is their own as well.

The church's most urgent task now is full scale promotion of democratic education. The church can enter thousands of schools, centers and church groups with an effective educational program. It has often been said that the church in Hong Kong is too rich (one Bishop is sitting on many gold mines and the other is in control of a fund worth at least a billion Hong Kong dollars) and hence is not ready to assume as well as to teach the kenotic ethics. But the church can turn this into a blessing. Educating the young to be responsible citizens can be expensive. Training the trainers (theological education and seminary training) is even more expensive. The church has the resources for it. It requires foresight and determination.

Hong Kong is going to face China, a rather irrational authority. Out of fear, people are afraid to speak the truth. Does the church dare to speak the truth? Can the church in Hong Kong assume the role of being a social critic? Only one viewpoint deters development. Silence often brings regression.

The church in Hong Kong needs to be a community of the faithful, daring to be different, offering alternative views. But first, Christians in Hong Kong must bury their differences, in dogma, in tradition, as well as in practice. They all have the same destiny, the destiny of 1997. They all share one table, the Lord's Table. What John described in terms of a disciple's treachery: "Someone who shares my table has lifted up his heels against me" (John 13:18) must be prevented from happening in Hong Kong. Church unity is not a luxury, it is essential.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

An International City

The First Century

In 1843, Hong Kong was turned from a fishing village into an entreport by the British. The British came to occupy Hong Kong for trade purposes. Ever since the turn of the century, the British had wanted to trade with China, a vast market even in those days. In the late 1880s, Hong Kong had become an important entreport, not only promoting trade between China and Britain, but between China and Southeast Asia, as well as North America and Europe.

As a British Crown Colony, Hong Kong was ruled exclusively by the British for the first 100 years. Only at the turn of the twentieth century would there be a symbolic Chinese presence in Hong Kong's Legislative Council. When the British came to Hong Kong, they brought with them not only the British form of government, but the legal system as well. Decades later, some Chinese traditions were fused into the British legal system.

As a British Colony, the British were the rulers and the Chinese, who came from China to seek better economic prospects, were the ruled. Discrimination against the Chinese abounded. Even wealthy Chinese were not allowed to make their homes on Victoria Peak. The Chinese had no social status. Most of the social clubs were exclusively for the expatriates. They went to the Hong Kong Club for a drink or a social function on weekday evenings or to the Jockey Club for horse racing on the weekends. Reportedly, many important business transactions as well as political decisions were made at the Hong Kong Club or at the Jockey Club.

The leading business firms between the 1840s and 1970s were Jardine Matheson, Swire, Hutchison Whampoa, and of course, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (known as the bank). They were all controlled by the British. No Chinese could become top management no matter how diligent and brilliant they were. A great many skillful Chinese merchants served as compradores (business agents) in these British firms. The British firms had to rely on them. In turn, they became extremely powerful and wealthy. The best known Chinese families in Hong Kong invariably were linked to this kind of business relationship.

Years of Change

Many Chinese fought alongside the British to defend the British dependent territory during the Second World War. After the war, there was less discrimination against the Chinese by the British. The British also came to appreciate the Chinese work ethic (work hard and ask for little in return) which has helped to bring Hong Kong into the modern age. Hong Kong Chinese were rewarded when a great many discriminatory rules and regulations were abandoned. After the riots in 1967, the Hong Kong government began to realize the importance of localization. Ethnic Chinese who served in the civil service were given better opportunities for promotion into the higher ranks of office. Today, half of the policy secretaries are Chinese; and for the first time in Hong Kong's history, Mrs. Anson Chan, a Chinese, has just started to serve as the Chief Secretary, head of the 190,000 strong civil service.

In 1981, Chinese was made the second official language. This encouraged more people to be involved in the whole social process. It was also an important step toward a more open society.

In the late 1970s local business tycoons began to take control of many traditionally British firms, like Hutchison and Whampoa, Wheelock Marden, Hong Kong Electric, Hong Kong Telecom, etc. In the 1980s, Hong Kong Bank appointed Sir Y.K. Pao, a shipping magnate, to be its deputy chairman. Oswald Chung was elected chairman of the influential Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club. Local

Chinese have partially taken over the reins of power in Hong Kong. The imminent take-over of Hong Kong by China also forced the British firms to divert financial resources to other parts of the world. Jardine moved its registered office to Bermuda in 1983. Hong Kong Bank moved its headquarters to London in late 1990. These acts serve as important signs of the final decline of British control and influence over Hong Kong.

A World Center

In the late 1980s, Hong Kong became one of the world's most important financial centers. In terms of the stock market's daily turnover, it ranked only after London, New York, and Tokyo. In the last two years, despite the uncertainty looming over Hong Kong because of 1997, there was an increase in foreign investors. Many multi-national corporations have established regional headquarters in Hong Kong. Yaohan, one of the biggest Japanese department stores, has moved its headquarters to Hong Kong.

Many overseas fund managers, led by the Americans and the Japanese, continue to show great interest in the Hong Kong stock market. That explains why, despite the Sino-British row over constitutional reforms in the past year, the Hang Seng Index rose from 5,500 last October to 10,000 in early December, 1993.

Hong Kong is indeed a cosmopolitan city. Ninety-seven percent of its population are ethnic Chinese. However, most of the fifty-five percent born in Hong Kong are very much westernized. The impact of western civilization is evident in all phases of life.

Southeast Asians come to Hong Kong to seek a better life. Almost 110,000 Filipina women are now in Hong Kong working as domestic helpers. Increasingly, many business people from all over the world come to Hong Kong to do business and to live. Hong Kong has now the biggest Canadian community outside of North America.

Hong Kong is an active member of GATT and APEC, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. Hong Kong is also actively

involved in many international voluntary organizations, such as the Red Cross, Amnesty International, International Social Service Council, etc.

By and large, Hong Kong has fulfilled many of the obligations presented to it by the world community. Take the Vietnamese Refugees as an example. Hong Kong was asked by the United Nations Conference on Vietnamese Refugees, held in Geneva in 1979, to be a first asylum country for the Vietnamese. Since 1978, Hong Kong has never turned away one single Vietnamese refugee who arrived in its waters. Since 1979, Hong Kong has helped to shelter several hundred thousand Vietnamese. Later, many countries who pledged to serve as resettlement countries in the Geneva Conference closed their doors and expected Hong Kong to do the job for them. When Hong Kong refused, the United States led a scathing attack on Hong Kong.

Hong Kong could have improved its treatment of the 200,000 Vietnamese who came to Hong Kong between 1978 and 1993. The attitude of some of the citizens was appalling. But without international support, Hong Kong cannot solve the refugee problem. Hong Kong has little land and social service facilities are scarce. There are still more than 30,000 Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong, many in closed camps waiting to be resettled.

Hong Kong is now an important world financial, business, and communications center. Two crucial reasons for this are the use of English as an official language and the presence of advanced telecommunications facilities.

Future Guarantees

On paper, Hong Kong's future was guaranteed by the Sino-British Accord reached in September, 1984 and ratified by respective Parliaments in May, 1985. The Accord, consisting of a Joint Declaration, three annexes and an exchange of memoranda, was duly deposited at the United Nations after it was signed by the two Prime Ministers (Margaret Thatcher and Zhao Ziyang) in December, 1984. As this is a

solemn agreement between two nations, both Britain and China have legal as well as moral responsibilities to ensure that whatever was agreed should be fully implemented. As this is an agreement deposited at the United Nations, the United Nations should closely monitor the agreement and ensure that the terms are fully implemented.

There are countries which take the Sino-British Agreement seriously. They believe that the agreement is the only guarantee of Hong Kong's future. A group of members of the Japanese Diet (lower house) have formed a "Hong Kong caucus." The group's major function is to monitor the development of Hong Kong. Japan is Hong Kong's second most important trading partner (exported HK\$166 billion worth of goods to Hong Kong and imported HK\$48 billion worth of goods from Hong Kong in 1992).

Canada has formulated a Hong Kong Policy, probably because they are the largest recipient of Hong Kong immigrants (about 24,000 a year since 1989). In 1992, the United States of America, Hong Kong's third most important trading partner, enacted the Hong Kong Policy Act which specifically mentions that the United States attaches great importance to human rights and democracy as key elements in Hong Kong's development.

In a way, the United States, Japan, and Canada are keen to see Hong Kong continue to develop at its own pace, without unnecessary interference from China (this is in accordance with the spirit of the Sino-British Agreement). Only a stable Hong Kong will be in accordance with their national interests.

Hong Kong's Usefulness

Hong Kong is not a Chinese city, although more than ninety-seven percent of its population are ethnic Chinese. The efficient way of conducting business is mainly due to the blending of Chinese and Western ways. Truly, Hong Kong is an international city. It is hoped that it will remain so after its sovereignty reverts to China in 1997. In a way, China does not need another Chinese city. It has plenty of its

own: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, etc. But China needs an international city like Hong Kong to be its window on the world. Hopefully, through Hong Kong, China can learn how to be more actively involved in the international community, and can acquire a great deal of modern technology from North America, Europe and other parts of Asia. China can learn from Hong Kong's experience (of struggling for survival as a refugee center in the 1950s to becoming one of the world's most vibrant cities in the 1990s). China can come to understand and benefit from its entrepreneurial vision, the rule of law (which says the law applies to all) rather than rule by men, an independent judiciary, broad freedoms given to individuals as well as corporate bodies, and an efficient civil service which is relatively free from corruption.

The market in China is a big attraction to practically all the countries of the world. Hong Kong continues to serve as a stepping stone into this market. Most of the big corporations which trade in China have an office in Hong Kong. Hong Kong is an extremely valuable support base for traders in China. As more and more international businesses operate in China in the run up to 1997, Hong Kong's importance increases, rather than decreases.

Signs of Erosion

Since the ratification of the Sino-British Accord in May, 1985, there have been signs that the ideal may not be able to continue. It was pointed out earlier that China is not about to let Hong Kong out of its control. China's vehement objection to having direct election introduced to Hong Kong's legislature was one of the many examples. Xu Jiatur, China's representative in Hong Kong from May, 1983 to February, 1990, and the most senior Chinese official to defect (Xu now lives in Los Angeles) said in his memoirs that China treated Hong Kong exceptionally harsh after June 4, 1989 (as reflected in the Basic Law promulgated in April, 1990). China viewed Hong Kong as a "subversive" base. China flatly refused to meet with democratic leaders in Hong Kong, denied their right to enter China and stated that they

will not be allowed to ride the “through train” (meaning they cannot continue to serve in elected office).

After the governor, Chris Patten, announced his political reform proposals in October, 1992, China has never stopped attacking Patten and those who support his proposals. Yet, these proposals are extremely mild. They do not go beyond what the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law allow, and they are supported by the people of Hong Kong.

China has further limited who it will listen to in Hong Kong. When China appointed twenty-three people from Hong Kong to sit on the Basic Law Drafting Committee in 1985, at least two leading democrats were included. In China’s appointment of the ninety-three advisors on Hong Kong affairs in 1992-93 and its appointment of thirty people to serve on the working panel for the preparatory committee in the setting up of the future SAR in 1997, all those who have dared to offer a dissenting view were excluded.

The Chinese autocratic way is well known in China. But when the Chinese leaders use the same methods to rule Hong Kong, it is somewhat surprising. China has promised that its system and way of life will not be forced upon Hong Kong and that only Hong Kong people (those elected by the people rather than those anointed by Beijing) will rule Hong Kong, and the future SAR government will be given highly autonomous status. Autonomy is the most crucial issue for Hong Kong. If China continues to interfere in Hong Kong affairs at its whim, Hong Kong will become just another Chinese city. Once Hong Kong ceases to be an international city, it will not be of any use to China or the international community.

Functions of Non-Governmental Organizations

Limits of Governments

The people of Hong Kong have often asked why there is a Sino-British argument over electoral arrangements for 1994-95? Why should

China and Britain spend so much time arguing over such trivial things? The two sides have had 170 hours of discussions in their seventeen rounds of talks. No agreement has been reached. Their quarrel has greatly disturbed many citizens who want to go on with their daily lives. China insists Patten's proposals violate the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and the diplomatic exchanges of early 1991. Yet when asked to specify, they cannot and will not.

As for the British, it was their fault for not at least attempting to talk to China before making the proposals (the British should know that "giving face" is an important gesture of respect). After making the proposals, earning the support of Hong Kong people, then it lost its courage to proceed and turned around to sit down with China. It wasted so much valuable time (six months). Britain lost credibility when it re-engaged with China. It may very well be a lame-duck government for the next three and a half years. That being the case, Hong Kong may experience more setbacks in its overall development.

From the outset, many people said let us go on with our daily routine of making money and leave the rest to the government. The recent row points out the reality that governments do not always work for the good of the people. They are more concerned with their "face," power, and holding onto their positions.

While governments are not honorable, people are. Immediately after Tiananmen Square, this author was invited to a constituency meeting in Manchester by a labor M.P. who invited this author to speak about the Hong Kong situation. The meeting wholeheartedly endorsed a call for Britain to give back the right of abode (in Britain) to Hong Kong citizens. Yet, those present (about one-hundred people) were mostly from the lower classes. Manchester was badly hit by unemployment, one of the worst off in England at the time. The labor M.P. later said that, the have-nots have more feeling for those who are afraid or who are suffering. While the people in Hong Kong must speak up, influential organizations should do the same. The predicament of the Hong Kong people should not be underestimated. As Hong

Kong people get further involved in their future, they need friends. International NGOs can be their best friends.

Business Concerns

Since Hong Kong became a business center at the turn of the century, it has been run like a corporation. It relies heavily on the business tycoons and managers who directly or indirectly run the city. But Hong Kong has become a very sophisticated city. It requires fuller participation from all sectors of the community, laborers and homemakers included.

Lee Kuan Yew, the senior minister from Singapore has come to Hong Kong often after he stepped down as Singapore's Prime Minister three years ago. Lee is always eager to give advice to Hong Kong on how to deal with China, and how to ensure Hong Kong's future. According to Lee, Hong Kong people should concentrate on economic affairs. They should stay away from politics, and especially they should never confront China.

Judging from Lee's track record as Singapore's Prime Minister for almost three decades, the advice is not surprising. Under Lee, Singaporeans did not enjoy freedom of the press or freedom of speech. When Vincent Chang, a devout Catholic activist criticized Lee, he was promptly arrested. Singapore has set a limit on the circulation of the Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia Week and the Asian Wall Street Journal because these journals have carried articles which Lee found offensive.

But Hong Kong is very different from Singapore, without the broad spectrum of freedoms given to citizens, the Hong Kong miracle is in danger of perishing. Theoretically, human rights/democracy and economic prosperity are not mutually exclusive as the business community often argues. As a matter of fact, unless human rights and democracy are respected, there is no rule of law. Without the rule of law, there will not be any sustainable economic progress. This is the experience of Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines. Leaders of

these governments finally realized that in order to have generally progressive development, more democracy is required.

This is the general situation of the whole world. People from every corner of the world are questioning why their own destiny is in the hands of people who cannot even represent them. The downfall of totalitarian leaders in Eastern Europe as well as in the Soviet Union illustrate this important point.

Coming back to the Hong Kong situation, the handful of elites who held onto the reins of power in the 1980s, have all become loyal to Beijing. These business tycoons have never had the interests and well-being of the people of Hong Kong in mind. They were loyalists to Britain because serving Britain through the Hong Kong government reaped generous rewards. As China is soon to become Hong Kong's master, they naturally have to kowtow to the new master. In doing so, their lack of integrity is exposed. But sadly, in some distant future, when they are no longer useful to China, they will be trodden upon just as others before them.

Moral Power of Parliamentarians

Legislators in Hong Kong on the whole are willing to go further than the government. Many times, they reflect the views of the people of Hong Kong much more than the government.

This is also true with parliamentarians from other parts of the world. When this author visited the United States and Europe, the few members of the US Congress, and the British and European parliamentarians he met were a lot more sympathetic to the plight of the people of Hong Kong than government officials.

The Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) of the British Parliament came to Hong Kong in April, 1989 to conduct a hearing on Hong Kong's development since the signing of the Joint Declaration. The FAC made three major recommendations: 1) all citizens born in Hong Kong be given the right of abode in the United Kingdom, 2) a Bill of Rights be enacted immediately, and 3) speed up the pace of democracy in Hong

Kong in such a way that fifty percent of the seats in the legislature be returned by direct election in 1991 and one hundred percent in 1995. Had the British Government adopted all these recommendations in 1991, Hong Kong would have been in a much stronger position now.

The FAC came to Hong Kong again in October, 1993 to investigate the impasse in the Sino-British negotiations. We have yet to see their findings and recommendations. But from their conversations with this author, they certainly are worried about China's attitude as well as Great Britain's inept responses.

Friends of Hong Kong throughout the world should be in constant communication with their parliamentarians. Often times, they can serve as a conscience to their own government; and they have a certain amount of leverage to pressure their governments to act. The United States' Hong Kong Policy Act came out of a bill proposed by Congressman John Porter of Illinois in 1989.

International Human Rights Groups

International human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Asia Watch often can act only when human rights of individuals are violated. But prevention is better than cure. As most of the people are convinced freedoms given to Hong Kong citizens will be narrowed rather than broadened after 1997, international human rights groups ought to help strengthen the protection for human rights that exists in Hong Kong; and improve on gaps in the structure that are likely to be abused by authorities in the future (e.g. public order ordinance and the film censorship ordinance). Both give the authorities unlimited power to curb the freedom of speech through demonstrations and the freedom of expression through films.

The United Nations Human Rights Commission has dealt in detail with the British government's report on human rights conditions in Hong Kong both in Geneva in 1989 and in New York in 1990. The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) sent a delegation to Hong Kong in June, 1991 to examine the evidence given by representatives

of the government, local NGOs, as well as other leaders of the community. Both the U.N. report and the ICJ report were critical of the British-Hong Kong government and expressed grave concern about Hong Kong's future.

One could say that the international NGOs have little or even no direct influence on the governments concerned. But what they say may have a significant effect on worldwide public opinion. In turn, the public can pressure the governments involved. That is why when the ICJ report was released both the British government and the Chinese government cautiously responded via the mass media.

The Ecumenical Church

The issue of Hong Kong is hardly included in the agenda of any international church meetings, World Council of Churches' sponsored meetings included. Hong Kong is a small territory. It cannot match the crisis in South Africa, the conflict in the Middle East, or the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. Many church leaders genuinely believe that Hong Kong can take care of itself. In the Asian setting, the reunification of North and South Korea, the armed conflict in Sri Lanka, the future of Taiwan and China and their development is always in the limelight.

Hong Kong is small, yet the implications of its development are of utmost importance. The satisfactory outcome of the "one country, two systems" experiment will show a method for two different systems to co-exist. At least, it could point to a way of solving international disputes. More care and attention should be given to Hong Kong. The British Council of Churches sent a delegation to visit Hong Kong in March, 1990. The German churches did the same thing in June, 1993. The former related more to the established church in Hong Kong, while the latter related more to the grassroots Christian groups. However, the intention of both was clear: they wanted to express the solidarity of the British and German churches and Christians with the churches and Christians of Hong Kong.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) co-sponsored a Mission

Conference on Hong Kong with the HKCC in April, 1991. A group of theologians from other parts of Asia were invited to sit down with Hong Kong Christians to share their visions and their common concern for Hong Kong. CCA has also published a book on Hong Kong.

Constant Vigil

We all live in one global city. Whatever happens in Hong Kong has implications for many parts of the world. Since we are all interdependent, we no longer can say, "mind your own business." China consistently insists that only China knows what is best for Hong Kong, therefore, only China can speak for Hong Kong. Nobody else should interfere with China's handling of Hong Kong. That is why China was extremely upset when the governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, and when Martin Lee, the leading democrat in Hong Kong, went around the world and asked the international community to give Hong Kong the support which it deserves. China believes that internationalizing Hong Kong is equivalent to violating China's sovereignty over Hong Kong.

There is no question that every government in the world, the British included, wants to have cooperation with China on Hong Kong after 1997. But as Hong Kong is an international city, surely it is appropriate for the international community to show its interest and support for Hong Kong. As a Japanese businessman put it very candidly, China cannot expect the business community to invest billions of dollars in Hong Kong without having any concern for its stability. Because of the way China has approached constitutional reforms in Hong Kong, the credit rating for Hong Kong has dropped.

Deep down in the hearts of the top Chinese leaders, they know that for the sake of China's rapid growth and development, China must get more involved in the international community. They know that whether they like it or not, they must play according to the rules of the game set by the major players in the international community. Every spring, when the American president is about to announce his decision

on whether the United States should grant Most Favored Nation Trade Status (MFN) to China, China always does something to improve on its human rights record. Often, a few political prisoners, known to the West, will be released. When China bid for the 2000 Olympic Games to be held in Beijing, China released: Wei Jinseng, the most famous political prisoner in China who dared to criticize Deng Xiaoping in 1979; Wang Dan, a student leader in Tiananmen; and Wang Xigit, a well-known intellectual in China.

In the MFN case, China always says that should the United States revoke China's MFN status, the United States would suffer. Of course, China is correct because all parties involved in any trade war would be losers. And yet, at the last moment, China complies with the request list sent by the United States government. This is because China does not want to be isolated by the United States and wants to remain a part of the international community, even though it is dominated by the Western economic powers.

In a way, China sees the importance of the respect for human rights, but insists that the right to survival is the most important human right and that it is up to each country to solve its problems on human rights in accordance with its own special circumstances. This is the theme of its White Paper on Human Rights published two years ago. This is what China proposed in the regional Human Rights Convention in Bangkok, prior to the Human Rights Convention held in Vienna in June, 1993. Many Asian countries concurred with China's views. The Bangkok Declaration was an important and controversial issue in Vienna in June, 1993.

But as all human beings are created equal, every individual ought to enjoy the basic rights of not only survival, but also of self-expression. These human rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. If people from a particular nation are deprived of these rights, it is those in authority who are responsible. There should not be any racial, national or class boundaries for human rights. They are universal. Every government has the responsibility of making sure

that no citizen is deprived of these rights.

As for Hong Kong, China has pledged to allow the Hong Kong system and its way of life to continue until the year 2047. Those promises are enshrined in the Joint Declaration. Therefore, the international community has a right to monitor how these promises are implemented in both letter and spirit.

The Common Task of Building Civil Societies

Human Dignity

For centuries people have lived in feudal societies. Rulers maintained that their authority came from the Divine. Then they used that theory to justify holding onto power by force. Learning was hardly open to the general population. During this time the Church belonged to the ruling class. The enlightenment in the West gradually forced open many doors to knowledge. In the nineteenth century, there were signs that human beings had come of age. The elitists could no longer monopolize the Divine. Feudalism had completely broken down in the North and West. However, it took a bit longer to collapse in the South and the East. But it was fast in coming.

What finally triggered people's awareness of the value of human beings and the complete distrust of civil as well as religious authorities was the rise and fall of the Nazi Party in Germany. The genocide of the Jews in Europe during the Second World War stunned the world. People learned that whatever happened in one nation or in a region could have world-wide ramifications. This knowledge has prompted international sanctions in South Africa for its apartheid policy, in China after its massacre of students in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, and now in Bosnia where ethnic cleansing of the Muslims is taking place.

In 1948, when the United Nations was founded, one of the first acts of the General Assembly was the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Member states (including China under

the Nationalist government) pledged themselves to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Declaration aims to recover and uphold the dignity of men and women in every corner of the world.

In 1975, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, two international covenants on basic human rights were initiated: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These two covenants spelled out each person's basic human rights. Britain ratified both covenants in 1976. China has yet to do so.

Many repressive governments in the Third World invariably ask to be exempted from certain provisions in the covenants. They argue shelter and food are more important than freedoms. In order to feed their people, they argue, they cannot at the same time give their people freedom of speech, unlimited freedom of the press and of religion.

There is no correlation between food and freedom. They are not mutually exclusive. People can enjoy both at the same time. "Men and Women do not live by bread alone" is not only a Biblical injunction, but is a truism in this day and age. Governments who argue that they can only provide food and shelter to their people, but not freedom merely show that they lack the will to act. They are terribly insecure and cannot tolerate any dissenting views.

Functions of Governments

Repressive regimes are the biggest barriers to building civil societies in this world. They cause their people to live in fear day in and day out. For even if their people go on with their business and totally ignore what the regimes do, they are still persecuted, tortured and killed.

As Mao Zedong's inscription outside the Xin Hua Gate, the seat of the Chinese government, explains, the major function of any government "is to serve the people." In order to serve the people well, they must listen to what the people have to say, what are their needs

and wishes.

Unfortunately, a great many leaders of government see things differently. They consider their control of government to be a prize to be used for their own benefit. Their job is to maintain control. Soldiers and the media are their servants and ordinary citizens are dispensable. Anybody who stands in their way must be eliminated one way or another.

Take China as an example. The Communist Party is the ruling party. The Communists wrote into the constitution four cardinal principles, one of which is that only the Communist Party is allowed to rule China!

Since the 1950s, the Chinese Communist Party has effectively eliminated all opposition both within the party and outside the party. Moreover, no leaders, from paramount leaders Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping on down, can tolerate dissidents. Those who dare to speak are put in prison, under house arrest, or are forced into exile.

Totalitarian and repressive regimes necessarily deter the pace of development in their own countries. It is because criticism is invariably discouraged when criticism is the only path to progress.

Rule of Law

In any civil society, the rule of law is respected. The rule of law means that the law applies to all: government leaders, influential business tycoons as well as ordinary citizens. Everyone must comply with the law. Nobody is above the law. This also ensures fair competition. On the other hand, the absence of the rule of law means being ruled by the everyday whims of men and women. This promotes corruption and economic unfairness.

Before the Independent Commission Against Corruption came into being in 1974, the rule of law was not always observed. If you had the money you could buy the cooperation of government. When you needed a permit to start a restaurant, you had to get clearance from a number of government departments like the Fire Department, the Urban Services Department, etc. If you were in a hurry (all business people

are), then you had to pay “tea money” to officials from these departments. For the past twenty years, because of the great efforts of ICAC, Hong Kong citizens and government officials have learned to respect the “rule of law.”

China now looks like what Hong Kong looked like twenty years ago. But worse still, China has not yet established a system based on the rule of law. Top Chinese leaders still prefer the rule by men, although they realize how serious corruption is in China. It is a well-known secret that when one wants to start a business in China, one has to go through five bureaucracies and six officials. The only way to pass through them is to pay (to bribe your way through, so to speak). The scale of this practice is so large that it has literally killed any kind of economic fairness or even competition in China.

In a senior party meeting in October, Jiang Zemin, the party chief, finally decided to take some action. He pleaded with his comrades to clamp down on corruption at every level. Jiang said if this problem is not properly dealt with, the Communist Party will be brought down very soon. But the most important task for China is to have the rule by men give way to the rule of law. This would require a massive effort on every level, especially in the fields of law and legal education. However, the party leadership must have the will to act immediately.

Drive for Democracy

At the outset, nobody in Hong Kong is asking for the Westminster form and style of democratic government to be installed in Hong Kong or China. Every situation is different. But whatever the situation may be, it is crucial that it be a democratic government. To put it simply, a democratic government is a government whose authority is rooted in the people. It is elected by the people. It must reflect the views of the people and be open and accountable to them. For only such a government is eager to observe the rule of law and to protect citizens' basic human rights.

To be a people-centered society, it must be a fair and just society.

It is important that a big gap should not exist between the wealthy and the poor. Only a democratic government has the will power to introduce policies which do not exclusively favor the rich and powerful. A democratic government is a government for all. Furthermore, only a democratic political system can ensure a smooth transition of power.

Yet, democracy is much more than a form of government or a political structure. It is about people's awareness that they are not on the periphery but are in the center of events. They are not the subjects, but the masters and mistresses of society. As such, they have a responsibility towards the running and development of their society. Electing their own representatives to the government and making sure that the government does the job for them is not only their right, but their solemn responsibility. This kind of democratic spirit must be a part of every citizen in Hong Kong, China, and the entire world.

Democratic movements throughout the world which aim to firmly establish a democratic government and to get people more aware and involved in the whole social and political process are contributing significantly towards the building of civil societies.

The Hong Kong Experiment

In final analysis, the Hong Kong "one country, two systems" experiment is about finding a way to build a civil society in Hong Kong under the shadow of two superpowers, China and Britain. The majority of the Hong Kong people are not optimistic about Hong Kong's future. Many Hong Kong friends from all over the world who know something about China are also pessimistic, as they would draw a parallel between Hong Kong and Tibet.

In 1951, when China annexed Tibet, an agreement was signed between the Beijing and the Tibetan governments. This document, known as the "seventeen principles," outlined China's basic policies regarding Tibet. From this document, we can see clearly that what China promised Tibet looks very similar to what China promised Hong Kong (as enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration).

In the Tibetan document it stated that Tibet would be made an autonomous region, that the Tibetan system and way of life would continue, that religious freedom in Tibet would be guaranteed and the Tibetan people would be given opportunities to participate in their own government. But the Tibetan experience turned sour. The promises never materialized. Since the signing of the accord in May, 1951, millions of Tibetans were exiled, put into prison or even executed.

However, the Hong Kong experiment stands a better chance of success. China has changed over the past forty years. True, in essence, little has changed within the Chinese Communist Party; it is still extremely rigid and impersonal. But, China is eager to be a key player in the international community. Furthermore, at least superficially, Chinese leaders do not want to take drastic measures, not in Hong Kong, not even on the mainland. The next generation of leaders will emerge and be in full charge within three or four years. The post-Deng leaders will be forced to be more pragmatic, and responsive to the wishes and expectations of their own people as well as the international community. Political reforms must take place with new economic reforms.

Forty years ago, few people knew where Tibet was, nor any knowledge about its complicated relationship with China. The Dalai Lama's campaign for the plight of the people of Tibet, over the past 40 years, as well as his Nobel Peace Prize, in 1989, has finally caught the attention of the international community. China cannot close Hong Kong's doors and do what it did to Tibet since the 1950s.

The Global Context

The future of Hong Kong and the outcome of the Hong Kong experiment have a direct bearing on many who seek to build civil societies on this planet earth. Contrary to the thinking of many, the 1997 issue in Hong Kong is far from settled or solved. There are still a great many issues which are waiting to be tackled.

The people of Hong Kong must continue to work hard. Working in the gaps between China and Britain, two superpowers with different

ideologies, is no easy task. Concerned individuals, churches and NGOs from the international community must lend their full support and help in the struggle.

The Hong Kong struggle is not about independence. It is about safeguarding the present system and present way of life, which includes a broad spectrum of freedoms for every citizen, the rule of law and a highly autonomous government which is accountable to an elected legislature. All these are provisions stipulated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. They are also necessary ingredients for a civil society.

The Hong Kong struggle is not only a struggle for the well-being of its 5.8 million citizens. If the struggle should succeed, it would benefit China and the rest of the world. It is in this context that the Hong Kong experiment deserves the full support of the international community.

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HONG KONG CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

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About the Author

Kwok Nai Wang, an ordained minister of the Church of Christ in China, Hong Kong Council, is a founder and the Director of the Hong Kong Christian Institute. A graduate of Hong Kong University and Yale University Divinity School, Kwok served as the pastor of the Shum Oi Church from 1966-77 and as the General Secretary of the Hong Kong Christian Council from 1978-88.

Kwok Nai Wang is the author of four books and has edited three others. He is also the editor of *Reflection*, a bi-monthly theological journal published by HKCI.

Front Cover

A photo of the Legislative Council Building in the midst of the financial and commercial district of Central.

Back Cover

A photo of 100,000 Hong Kong citizens remembering the June 4, 1989 crackdown on the democratic movement in China.